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# TRIVENI



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Editor: K. RAMAKOTISWARA RAU

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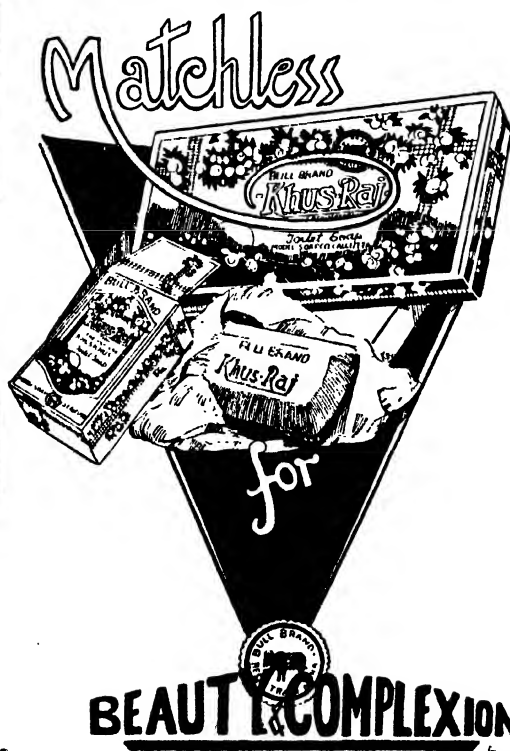
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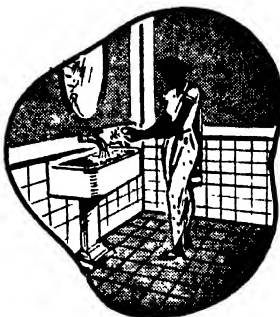
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*JOURNAL OF INDIAN RENAISSANCE*

**Editor: K. RAMAKOTISWARA RAU**

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'Triveni' is devoted to Art, Literature and History. Its main function is to interpret the Indian Renaissance in its manifold aspects.

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... he that laboureth right for love of Me  
Shall finally attain! But, if in this  
Thy faint heart fails, bring Me thy failure!

—THE SONG CELESTIAL

## 'The Triple Stream'

BY K. RAMAKOTISWARA RAU

### A FRIENDLY GESTURE

After weeks of self-imposed silence, the Viceroy delivered a very friendly and comprehensive message to the people of India, regarding the constitutional impasse. While any direct mention of the Congress was avoided, the message was, throughout, an invitation to that national organisation to study the full implications of the scheme of provincial autonomy envisaged in the new Constitution, and to accept office in a spirit of co-operation. Towards the end, he threw out a hint that failure to work the Constitution might lead to a suspension of it in the recalcitrant 'Congress' Provinces.

Lord Linlithgow is wiser than Lord Zetland. He never alluded to the Faizpur resolution on wrecking the Constitution, —a resolution which, in the opinion of the Secretary of State, is a living symbol of Congress intransigence. But the reference to the work of the *interim* Ministers was unhappy and not altogether relevant to the issue. Creatures of the Governor, and responsible to no electorate or legislature, it is no wonder that they do get on harmoniously with the Governor; their experience is no criterion for judging the possible effects of a serious disagreement between Governors and Congress Ministers.

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In some quarters this reference to the puppet Ministers was looked upon as a cruel joke, albeit an unconscious one.

Despite the courtesy and friendliness that marked the Vice-regal pronouncement, it does not advance the constitutional position so as to meet the Congress demand. It merely sums up and clarifies the issues; it indicates that the Secretary of State, the Viceroy, and the Provincial Governors are all of one mind in regard to the exercise of the special powers vested in the Governors. It must now be easier for the Congress to take a decision without further statements and counter-statements.

That decision will have been taken before these lines reach the readers of *Triveni*. The balance of opinion seems to be in favour of giving the Constitution a trial. It is being urged that no harm can be done to the national cause by the Congress running the governmental machine for a time; some good might result in the shape of relief to the poor and the downtrodden. But the greatest good that can come of it is the demonstration of the fundamental truth, that this Constitution cannot be worked for long without acute conflicts between the Governors and the Ministries. Congressmen can be but brief sojourners in the seats of the mighty, with little faith in the usefulness or durability of the complicated and ill-balanced machine they are handling, and ready to walk out the moment their plans of reform are thwarted. With the Faizpur resolution in the background, they function as Ministers primarily with a view to facilitate the ending of the present Constitution and its speedy replacement by a genuine scheme of Swaraj.

It is this provisional nature of their tenure of office that needs to be emphasised. Just as the Governors are not bound by any prior agreement restricting the use of their special powers, the Congress Ministers too are not pledged to continue in office under all circumstances. The Working Committee or its Parliamentary Board may issue definite instructions that Congress Ministers should offer to resign whenever it becomes clear that the Governor's powers are being exercised, in the sphere of his special responsibilities, otherwise than in accordance with the Ministerial advice. It is not enough that the Ministers are free to explain publicly that they are not responsible for a particular decision; it must soon become evident that every exercise of power, on a major issue, contrary to

## ‘ THE TRIPLE STREAM ’

Ministerial advice will lead to resignation and a fresh election to the Legislature. In this way, the Governor's choice, on every important occasion, will lie between (1) acceptance of Ministerial advice, (2) finding new Ministers who can command a majority in the Legislature, or (3) suspending the Constitution under Sec. 93. Sooner or later the special powers must either be scrapped by Parliament or become atrophied by non-user. The Congress did not frame the Constitution, and it is under no obligation to so work the Constitution as to perpetuate every obnoxious feature of it.

Acceptance of office in the Provinces is neither a momentous nor an irrevocable step. It is just an incident in the long and strenuous fight for winning power for the people of this land to order their own affairs,—one of the many experiments with Truth for which Gandhiji has made himself responsible.

### *EDUCATIONAL REFORM*

The Government of Madras have published detailed proposals for the re-organisation of education in the Province, which reveal an earnest desire to improve the standards of efficiency right through the school and University courses. This is the biggest scheme of reform put forward within recent years, and it is the duty of the public to offer constructive suggestions with a view to improving the scheme and making it subserve the needs of a progressive people.

It is clear that no scheme can be considered satisfactory which does not provide immediately for universal compulsory education for all children for a period of at least six years, between the ages of seven and twelve. Higher elementary schools providing vocational alongside of literary education must exist in every town and village, with this difference that the vocational training in the rural areas will be allied to agriculture and simple village handicrafts, while in urban areas it will tend to be more industrialised. There need be no rivalry between these remodelled elementary schools and the middle schools. In fact the middle schools may cease to exist altogether, for, students from the elementary schools, rural or urban, can straightaway enter a high school, and continue their studies for four years, between the ages of thirteen and sixteen. For the first and second years, the curriculum of studies will be the same for all, but in the third

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and fourth years there will be a partial variation with a bias either towards literature and science, or towards commerce and industries. But no student will at this stage be marked out prematurely as unfit for a University career. The courses of study in all high schools must be complete and self-contained, without being dominated by a prospective University standard. At the end of four years, the student gets a certificate from his institution in token of his having successfully completed the course, without the need for a standardised public examination. No high school should be burdened with the task of providing instruction corresponding to the present Junior Intermediate class. The business of the high school must be to give a thorough grounding in two or three languages, and at least two optional subjects, and to enable the student to enter the public service in its lower rungs or apprentice himself to some useful trade.

After completing the four-year high school course, every student with higher ambitions must be free to seek entrance to the University. But he will be admitted on the strength of his school certificate to what may be called a 'preparatory' class. At the end of one year, he will sit for the Matriculation examination of the University. If he passes, he enters on a three-year Degree course. The weeding out will come in appropriately at this stage, and not three years earlier as the Government proposes.

The Degree courses will be the usual Pass courses, but with greater variety and range of subjects for choice, and every student with ordinary diligence will get the degree as a matter of course. Only, those who pass out with distinction, and display special aptitude for higher study and research, will take post-graduate courses.

These are my suggestions which may be worked out in greater detail. It is enough to point out here that the Government's scheme errs in its desire to mark off the intellectuals from the non-intellectuals too prematurely, in its anxiety to shut out large numbers of students from a University course, and its insistence on too many examinations and too much of departmental control. It fails also to tackle the problem of general illiteracy—an evil which ought to be wiped out in less than a decade.

# *The Obliteration of Illiteracy*

BURRA V. SUBRAHMANYAM

In 1934 we were told by a senior Indian member of the I.C.S., who had then returned to India after observing the movements of new life in present day Europe, that it was possible even in our state of political backwardness to devise means whereby India need not remain illiterate for ages to come. Our Ministers of Education and our Directors of Public Instruction have been suffering not merely from want of funds to tackle the problem of illiteracy—a proposition accepted on all hands—but they have been suffering no less from want of imagination and, perhaps also, from want of enthusiasm. It was refreshing, therefore, to be told that the problem could be tackled even when circumstances were as disheartening as they continue to be. There is nothing so easy as to be dominated by difficult circumstances and to complain about them in self-excuse. Progress is always the result of a certain restlessness and of intrepid thought. Before proceeding, however, to consider the very interesting suggestions made by this Indian Civilian, it may first be found useful to state the problem of illiteracy accurately and to analyse the methods that have been so far employed to meet the problem.

The problem of illiteracy was world-wide before 1870. In 1867, in England, the Tory government of which Disraeli was the moving spirit extended the franchise to a vast number of illiterate workers in the famous attempt to 'dish the Whigs,' and three years later Gladstone's government started the scheme of compulsory elementary education in the process of what was known as 'educating our (political) masters,' the masters being the new electorate. Other important countries in the West began taking full measures against mass illiteracy only in the last quarter of the 19th century. Till 1900, roughly speaking, the peasants and labourers in Europe and America were not more literate than are our Indian peasants of today. This fact is sometimes overlooked by quite eminent people, here and abroad, who feel oppressed by the magnitude of the problem in India and who are inclined to be very pessimistic about the



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future of Indian literacy. India, illiterate to the extent of more than ninety per cent today, is behind literate Europe by about fifty years at the most—a short enough span in the history of a nation. And there is nothing to warrant the assumption that the Indian peasant is less educable than the average European. Some of the most grudging critics of this country had to accept that our peasant was at least the equal of his white-skinned brother in shrewdness, commonsense, and general intelligence. It is necessary, on the whole, to emphasise the fact that there is no cause for special despair about the quality of our illiterate people and about the position in time of our problem of illiteracy. Here in India we have brains enough in all strata of society, and we are not very late in the race of the nations towards complete literacy.

Europe, however, when she decided that her people should no longer remain illiterate, had not merely imagination and enthusiasm but also money wherewith to liquidate illiteracy. Industrial and commercial expansion, with the riches that followed, came to mean the expansion of literacy too. But India is backward and poor, and the example of Europe is not particularly valuable to us as at present we are. If England could start a network of schools all over the country, and enforce through efficient local bodies the compulsory attendance at school of all boys and girls at a certain age, we have no immediate hopes either for the network of schools or for very efficient local bodies. It is true that some of our local bodies (at any rate, in certain parts of certain Provinces) have availed themselves of legislation to experiment with compulsory primary education within limited areas. But such bodies have been few; they have not generally been working efficiently; the experiment has not anywhere penetrated beyond the towns, and the entire rural area is unaffected.

Russia, with her squalid conditions before Lenin and Stalin and with her remarkable progress in literacy during but little more than a decade, may seem at first sight to hold out lessons to us in our combating illiteracy. But a careful examination will reveal that even the methods of Russia are beyond our reach. For, after all, whatever might have been the original disabilities of the Revolutionaries in combating illiteracy, latterly, with the increase of power and the stabilisation of

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dictatorship, Russia, in her scheme of compulsory general elementary education, called the *Vseobutch*, decided to tackle the problem of mass illiteracy exactly as Europe had tackled it before. The schools might have been organised on a basis peculiar to the circumstances of the Revolution, and instruction might have been offered of a sort adapted to the immediate political and economic needs of the party in power. But, as in other progressive European countries, the organisation of the schools by the State was there, the compulsion was there, and the efficiency was there. And Russia is achieving complete literacy exactly as Europe achieved it before.

And so it is obvious that we have to think out somewhat unprecedented methods in order to achieve a growing literacy in our country. The methods which we have been employing so far are not peculiar to us. Night schools have a hoary past. 'Adult education' was, and is, a very valuable phrase wherever there have been illiterate groups. And the Library Movement (which we need not really mention, because it is a movement to maintain literacy and not to create it) is common to the whole civilised world. Actually, adult education and night schools, although the two often coincide, comprise the total attempt so far made in this country to achieve literacy.

Today, the night schools in our country are, in the last analysis, mere signs of accepting the problem of illiteracy, not a solution thereof. To learn a language and to study Arithmetic during half-sleepy hours in the dim light of a kerosene lamp, are nearly impossible to an adult peasant or labourer who has toiled the whole day and needs by night, more than anything else, relaxation. This is teaching the wrong thing to a person at the wrong age during wrong hours. The sooner we realise that the adult is to be tackled by propaganda and not by elementary education, by films of hygiene and talks of common-sense rather than by the multiplication table and elaborate rules of grammar, the sooner can we conserve that energy now being wasted by both the teacher and the taught, and perhaps utilise it better. The most optimistic cannot, and should not, expect more from an illiterate adult than that he will not stand in the way of his children becoming literate.

It must also be mentioned that at present the institution of night schools in India is a source of danger in another

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way. It is giving rise to a false sense of security. There is somehow an atmosphere about night schools which makes the organisers feel in a self-complacent manner that they have not merely undertaken the obliteration of illiteracy but that they are on the proper track and near the destination. With all due respect to them, the truth is far otherwise. The acceptance of the night schools as a solution is preventing us from realising that there is an urgent need to discover a really satisfactory solution. Illiteracy on a vast scale like ours cannot be substantially affected by stray individuals working at odd corners during inconvenient hours. This is ultimately so much dissipation of valuable energy. What we need is a concerted mass attack over large areas for a continuous length of time. Anything less effective will remain the province of sentiment and not of logic.

Although we may discourage the idea of educating our adults in the normal school-going manner, it is likely that there will remain even in our country a certain number of adults who are willing to go through the whole process of elementary education, whether they are free during some hours of the daytime or have to toil the livelong day. These are people endowed with a special aptitude for learning. To such people should be available not only the entire propaganda that should educate the rest of the adults, but also the routine system that should rescue the young illiterate.

The real problem of illiteracy is always the young illiterate, because in ten years it is the young illiterates who swell the ranks of adult illiteracy. The same arguments are tenable in their case, as in the case of adults, against a whole day school or a night school. It is true that the young people do not toil so much as their parents. But specific economic duties are laid on their shoulders during the day, whether they are tending cattle everyday of the year or doing more important work in the season. Every village and every villager will maintain that these duties are indispensable. Civilised governments see to it that no child under a certain age, who ought to be attending a school, shall be sent down to labour. But in the absence of favourable conditions in our country, we have to take these daily duties of the youngsters into consideration while prescribing a course of elementary education for them.

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Setting aside for a moment longer the question as to who should organise the schools and who should teach, it is appropriate to maintain at this stage that the schools to be established for the children of the villages should be early morning schools and not night schools. Night schools, by their very nature, cannot induce any enthusiasm for studies in the children. And schools to be really effective must also be able to create that enthusiasm. It should not be difficult to induce parents to leave their children free for a couple of hours every morning. The classes may extend from 7 a.m. till 9 a.m. One hour may be devoted to reading and writing, and the other to Arithmetic. In each linguistic area the instruction should be in the mother-tongue, and there should be no intrusion of other languages into this educational scheme. It is quite reasonable to expect that the changing of a night school into a morning school will increase both the receptivity of the students and the efficiency of the teaching. That there is need for improvement will be clear if accurate statistics are gathered of the slipping back into illiteracy of the 'night school' literates. The 'wastage' at present must be enormous.

In addition to the normal school of the morning, there should be during the early night instructive talks; the telling of Puranic, Biblical or other religious stories; the projection on a screen of pictures illustrating hygiene and sanitation—or, in other words, anything that combines instruction with amusement, the only way of educating the average adult and of making any youngster keen on gaining further knowledge. This instruction plus amusement should not be forced on the village every night of the week but should be at regular intervals, the intervals being properly timed to keep alive the interest of the villagers. These, however, are minor details that can be adjusted in the course of experience.

But the most important question still remains. And this is the organisation of the teachers for each village. If illiteracy is to disappear and if the Government cannot afford a school and paid teachers in each village, it is necessary that some other means should be devised. We have today in this country a vast host of illiterate people on the one side, and on the other a staggering number of young men getting higher education and finding themselves without any employment later on. Suggestions have been numerous of late, whether they issue from the platform

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of the nationalists or of the yearly University Convocations, that these young men should go to the villages and serve the 'Nation' or the 'State'—the two words denoting a subtle difference of psychology!—by educating the villager in every possible way. Perhaps once a year in the University buildings and once a month at a political meeting, young men feel a thrill at the thought of their going out into the countryside and reclaiming lost souls, but there it ends. It is a most deplorable fact that the students of this country are not trained from the beginning in that spirit of self-reliance which alone can make them organise any constructive work on a large scale. The sight of self-reliance and of initiative among young people is the delight of those alone who can watch the Youth Movements in Europe today. It is unfair to expect of the present generation of Indian students that, after the sort of training they have had in their schools and Universities, they will be able to organise a movement all by themselves for the uplift of the villages. And it is still more inexcusable to indulge in wild dreams of an individual student going out alone to a village, there to spread the enormous culture he has gained at the University. This is ignoring the present soullessness of University education in this country, no less than it is ignoring the economic factors in the average student's life.

If the students cannot organise themselves, can any one else organise them? And how and when is the organising to take place? It is at this point that the suggestions of the Indian Civilian come in very relevantly. He reminds us that almost every State in Europe demands a couple or more of years from the life of every citizen for the service of the State in the form of military conscription. He also draws our attention to the fact that Germany has launched upon what is called the Land Reclamation Scheme, the reclaiming of hitherto uncultivated land being done with the active help of Young Germans, male and female alike, who form the *Arbeitsdienst*, the Labour Service. These young people who have matriculated cannot now join a University in Germany unless they have been six months in some village helping to reclaim land. These two examples are mentioned by him not with a view to exaggerate the virtues of compulsion and conscription or of dictatorship and war, but to emphasise the fact that it is not

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unusual or unprecedented that one should give a little part of one's lifetime to the service of one's community. And he suggests that we should similarly try to establish a state of affairs in this country when all young people can give to organised educational work in the villages, say, a year of their lives before they finish their education and face their individual problem of life. The loss of a year is definitely not too great a loss to young men who find themselves without any work for a considerable time after leaving the University. There is no doubt that if a vote were taken today among the entire bulk of educated people and of young people getting educated, the vote would be nearly unanimously in favour of a year being taken from a student's life and being utilised for the uplift of the illiterate. Here today in India we too are experiencing a new life ; and if the roused imagination of young men and women is not readily harnessed and profitably employed, it is a great chance lost in the history of a nation. Any scheme so to utilise the services of our country's young men will be peculiarly appropriate just now, because both the Government and the people are very much alive to the need for village uplift, and young men who enter life only after apprenticing in the service of the villages will have a better perspective of our national problems. It follows that there will be nothing autocratic in principle if, for instance, it is decided that a matriculate before seeking admission into the University should spend a year in a well-organised Village Reclamation Scheme. Or, if, as is only too likely, the idea of the matriculate should be rejected on account of his immaturity, it may be insisted that a student who has passed the Degree examination should spend a year in a Village Reclamation Scheme before he is entitled to his diploma. A break of a year's duration at any other stage in the course of education is undesirable. Education up to the Matriculation is certainly sufficient to qualify one for the purpose of giving the minimum education to the illiterate. The advantage of making the year of service a condition precedent to one's being admitted into a University is this: the annual number of matriculates is many times the number of graduates, which means so many more 'student-teachers' for the villages. The glaring disadvantage, perhaps outweighing possible advantages, is that the matriculates will be too young to take part in the scheme. And

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parents of these young men can complicate the situation with their fears and rights. There may thus be no choice but to insist on a year's service in a village only after the Degree examination.

But, in order to take any such novel step, there should be a well-organised scheme for the reclamation of the illiterate in which these students can take part. We have seen that the students cannot themselves organise such a scheme. The Universities may not undertake the organising because they have enough work within their own portals to occupy all their time. And, also, there is no escaping the fact that in each Province the Government alone is powerful enough to organise the scheme, just as the Government alone can command the many subsidiary facilities which contribute largely to the realisation of the scheme. With the creation of the necessary spirit among students, the students gladly offering their free services to their illiterate brothers and sisters, it should not be an appreciable burden to the Government, either financially or administratively, to inaugurate a scheme for the education of the illiterate with this band of young people. In the end, all the expenditure that the Government incur on account of the scheme will be the expenses for the boarding and lodging, in each village (or close group of villages) where there are no facilities for education at present, of a minimum of two 'student-teachers.' If there are not enough 'student-teachers' for all such villages, all that can be done is, of course, to start the campaign for literacy in as many villages as possible with the available number, and then to appeal to the general public for suitable people to come forward and make up the deficiency.

If the financial side is not difficult to manage, the purely educational side of it, mere matters of detail like the syllabus of study and the time-table, will be found simpler still to tackle. Roughly speaking, an illiterate person may need two years to become a mentionable literate. The easiest course is, therefore, to have two classes under two 'student-teachers,' one for students who are fresh, and one for those who have successfully finished a year of studies. If by any chance at a future time more than two 'student-teachers' are available for each rural school, the courses of study may be rendered proportionately more elaborate and thorough.

## THE OBLITERATION OF ILLITERACY

In the establishment of a lasting cooperation between the University students and the Provincial Governments over the provisions of a scheme like the one outlined above, lies the only solution in the immediate future of the problem of illiteracy in this country. For, it is almost certain that even under the new Constitution the Indian Ministers cannot find enough money to push forward any scheme for a normal net-work of schools throughout this country without having recourse to something like a scheme of 'student-teachers.'

It must be noted that only young men have been considered as going out to the villages, and not young women. Young women may not be despatched to villages as easily and confidently as young men. Besides, the number of matriculates (and graduates) among women is considerably low, and any just distribution of them among the villages is inconceivable. But, merely for this reason, lady students should not be exempted from a year's service as a condition precedent to entering a University or taking a diploma. There is in every town a large body of women who have leisure during certain hours of the day and who waste it completely for want of proper educational facilities. It may be found not altogether impossible to organise this valuable year in the life of lady students for the spread of adult education, whether it be by the usual school-course, or by oral instruction and propaganda, among such women in urban areas.

Today, in this country, we are anxious to do everything to improve the soil which men plough, the seeds which men sow, and the cattle with which men plough their fields, but we are not thinking with equal care of improving the men themselves. In a welter of economic facts, we are ignoring the central economic factor, the man. It is very easy to answer back that a man cannot become a very much improved man just because he knows the alphabet. But the transition from illiteracy to literacy in the case of any person is not so much a transition from one level of ignorance to another as it is a transition from one world to an altogether different world, from a world of superstition and acquiescence to a world of light and independent judgment. Literacy is like the chemical catalyst. It may appear to be of little significance in itself, but it can make every force of national regeneration more effective in the moulding of our country's future, just as surely as the illiteracy



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of the bulk of the people retards the progress of even the more progressive elements in the country. But apart from any argument of collective good to the country, literacy is also the birthright of every individual so far as a human being can have any fundamental rights from birth. Anything worthwhile that a man can achieve, he can achieve only by first being a literate, and the illiterates, starting life as intellectual cripples, are largely foredoomed to lead incomplete and unfulfilled lives. The tragedy is the greater that the illiterate folk themselves little know that their lives could have been fuller. "That even one man should die ignorant who had in him the capacity to learn," wrote Carlyle, "I call the greatest tragedy." And yet this greatest of tragedies happens to more than three hundred million people in our own country under our very eyes.

# *The Book and the Bride*

BY N. S. PHADKE, M.A.

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[Translated from **Marathi** by the Author]

A marriage is caused in several ways, of course. Love may bring it about; parental authority may order it; riches may tempt a person into it; and so on and so forth. But can you ever conceive a book, carelessly left at the booking window of a railway station, leading up to a marriage? You'd naturally call it absurd. And yet, that's exactly what happened in the case of Bhargava.

On a certain Sunday afternoon he went to the Bori Bunder station, from where he intended to take a local train to Thana. His uncle, who lived there, had called him. Bhargava knew why. His uncle would say to him, as he had already said a dozen times before:

"Look here, Bhargava, it's high time now that you got married. You are an M.A., well settled in life as a Professor in a college, and you've put nearly thirty years behind your back. How long would you remain a bachelor now? Don't you realise that your mother is anxious to have a daughter-in-law in the house?"

And Bhargava also knew what he would say in reply:

"What's the hurry, uncle? I am not really grown up as you and mother imagine. Often I go without a shave for days together, and my face doesn't look rough or shabby. I feel like a youngster still."

His uncle would laugh at the joke, but make a very serious face again, and try to impress upon him how imperative it was that he soon jumped into the matrimonial trenches.

All the way to Bori Bunder, Bhargava's mind was busy constructing his conversation with his uncle.

He had to wait a little at the booking office. He found a girl standing at the window. She got her ticket and hurried away to the platform.

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Bhargava couldn't see her face. But she was a smart girl, to be sure. A tall pretty thing, proudly walking away! He kept gazing at her back—at the blue border of a simple white 'saree' dangling from her shoulders to the hips, at the ample braid of her dark hair contrasting with her fair complexion, at the delicate little hand which clutched at the loose end of her garment blown by the breeze, and at the little feet that hurried in such a perfect rhythm!

When she was lost in the crowd, Bhargava turned to the window and, flinging a coin on the counter, said, "One Thana, please."

As he was about to gather his ticket, his elbow touched a book. Yes, it was a book. A seven shilling six pence novel.

Possibly it belonged to the girl. She must have left it there in her hurry.

Yes, it was her book clearly enough. And it was also clearly his duty, thought Bhargava, to return it to her. He picked up the book, and ran down to the platform.

His eyes searched for her. But she was not to be found on the platform. She must have taken her seat in the train. Bhargava peered into every compartment—even in the ladies' compartment, but in vain. He was wondering if he ought to hunt for her in the guard's brake; and perhaps he would have done it. But just then he heard the train whistle, and had to give up the idea. The girl had evidently boarded another local train.

Though it was now impossible for Bhargava to trace the girl, nobody could prevent him from thinking of her. So he let his mind do that. It was quite likely, it occurred to him, that the girl had inscribed her name on the book. He eagerly opened it. Yes, there it was—her name!

A prosaic name obviously, written in a timorous illegible hand: Gangoo Kulkarni. But Bhargava thought the name very musical and the hand so beautiful. He kept gazing at it. What a pity it was, he thought, that she didn't write her address under the name. He chafed at the inadequacy of the inscription. Even went to the length of declaring to himself that, if ever he was made the Dictator of India, the first ordinance he would promulgate would be that handsome girls must write their complete addresses on their books. But of course there

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was no prospect of his becoming an Indian Mussolini in the near future, and his chagrin didn't help him much at the moment. The only comfort he could offer to his mind was the hope that it wouldn't be long before, by chance, he would meet the girl again somewhere. There was no telling when. And he therefore decided to carry the girl's book always under his arm.

He was repeating this resolve to himself for the hundredth time when he went up the steps of his uncle's house. He was more prepared today than usually to blast his uncle's talk of marriage. It was clear and simple, he thought, that someday soon he would meet this girl Gangoo, strike a warm friendship with her, and by his passionate love carry her off her feet .....He would curtly tell his uncle today that he had almost fixed his marriage, and therefore people need not worry about it.

Listening to his uncle's talk, he was inwardly watching for an opportunity to tell him about the girl he loved, and to ask him to end the talk. But wonder of wonders! His uncle began to talk of Gangoo! And Bhargava, who had come to scoff, remained to listen!

It appeared that an old college friend of Bhargava's uncle, Rangrao Kulkarni, who had served as a Government doctor in the Bijapur and Sholapur districts, was now transferred to Mahabaleshwar. He had a daughter named Gangoo, studying in one of the Bombay colleges. He now intended to marry her, and wanted to know if he could hope to have Bhargava for his son-in-law.

His uncle said: "I must tell you, Bhargava, that Doctor Rangrao is quite a rich fellow, and since he has no son, all his money would go to the man who would marry Gangoo. Doctor Rangrao tells me in his letter that his daughter would be spending her vacation with him at Mahabaleshwar, and he proposes that you should pay him a short visit, so that you can make the acquaintance of his daughter and decide for yourself how far she would suit you."

How far she would suit him!

Bhargava wanted to cry that she would suit his hand like a perfect glove!

But the coincidence that his uncle should be talking to him of the very girl after whom his own heart had fled was too much of a surprise for him, and he kept silent.

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His uncle misunderstood his silence, and pleaded: "I say, Bhargava, you mustn't argue with me this time. This is a fine chance for you. Daughters of rich parents do not lie scattered on the footpaths of Bombay. I must admit, of course, that I've never seen this girl Gangoo, and have no idea of her looks. My friend Rangrao never struck me as handsome; and having spent so many years in the hot climate of Bijapur and Sholapur, he may now have developed into a perfectly ugly fellow. But who knows, perhaps his daughter might be....."

Bhargava almost said, "O uncle, I know she's a lovely girl. I saw her only an hour back." But he controlled himself. He must not give out his secret. What he therefore actually said was,

"Uncle, do you take me for a fool who judges a girl merely by her looks?"

"No, no, I don't mean quite that. But I hinted at the possibility. And I can't deny that good looks are after all a big asset."

Bhargava screwed up his nose, and shrugged his shoulders, and declared,

"Maybe. But if you ask me, I set very little value on a fair complexion or a straight nose by itself."

His uncle was immensely pleased. And it was decided that Bhargava should pay a visit to Dr. Rangrao.

\* \* \*

When, a week later, Bhargava got down at the bus stand at Mahabaleshwar, he thought himself to be the happiest man on earth. At least, very nearly the happiest. For, only a few minutes were left between now and the blissful moment when he would enter the house of his host, and set his eyes on the girl of his heart.

The sight of his host, Dr. Rangrao, however, who was present at the bus stand to receive him, was quite a shock to Bhargava. He knew of course that the doctor wouldn't snatch a prize at a beauty competition. But he had not imagined him to be so repulsively ugly. A very short fellow with an oily black complexion and a hog-like fat neck in which a sweat-soiled hard collar stuck, a Chinese nose difficult to discover between two thick lenses behind which small tired eyes blinked—the doctor, with a big 'chiro' in his mouth, looked almost like a big vicious worm!

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When the worm grinned and greeted him, Bhargava's honest desire was to beat a retreat from Mahabaleshwar by the first available bus.

But his reason argued with his impulse: "Don't be a fool, young man. What if the doctor is as ugly as the first primitive monkey? You aren't asked to marry him. You've come for his daughter. And you know how ravishingly charming she is. Roses have thorns, and so have pretty girls disgusting fathers!..."

He took courage in both hands, and with one of them shook the hairy hand of the doctor which waited in a gesture of welcome.

When he entered the drawing-room of the doctor's house, he saw a girl getting up from the sofa in surprise and running away to the inner apartment. He could get only a flitting glimpse of her. But he was dead certain that it wasn't Gangoo.

And yet it must be she.

For the doctor called after her, "Gangoo, you fool, what makes you run away like a hare? Come, come. Do you fear that our guest will eat you up like a cannibal? Look at these girls, Mr. Bhargava, they go to schools and colleges, and are yet as timid as sparrows. Ha! ha! ha! All right. I say Gangoo, now bring the tea here yourself, and that would serve our purpose."

Bhargava was simply astounded.

How could this be Gangoo?.....

The girl whom he had seen at the Bori Bunder station?

That lovely blue border of a snow-white 'saree' dancing on a slender delicate form! And this unclean garment hiding shapeless broad hips!—Those exquisite feet dancing to a rhythm! And these malish rough hairy legs!—That ample braid of raven black hair! And this little speck-like knot of smoke coloured fibres!

No, no. There must be some beastly mistake.

It was a confused and annoyed Bhargava who took a wash, and changed his clothes, and returned to the drawing-room.

He was telling himself that within a few minutes Gangoo would arrive with tea, and everything would be explained.

But things became even more confusing when Gangoo brought the tea. For, there remained no doubt whatever that the black, fat, shapeless girl who stood blushing before him was

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the doctor's daughter, and that her name was Gangoo Kulkarni! And there was also no doubt whatever that the Gangoo Kulkarni he had seen the other day at the station was a pretty maid of uncommon charm!

How could this utter contradiction be explained!

At the first suitable opportunity on the next day, Bhargava said to his host,

"I must leave tomorrow."

The doctor whipped his 'chiot' from his mouth in surprise, and unmindful of the ash that dropped on his shirt front, exclaimed,

"Tomorrow? No, no. How could you go tomorrow? You know that you came here for a certain business, and unless it is settled..."

Bhargava had anticipated these words, and, like a captive soldier planning his escape from the enemy's camp with minute care, had a rejoinder ready. He waved his hands and said,

"My business? O, it's as good as settled, you know."

"Settled?" the doctor asked with glee, "Do you really mean it? I'm so glad that you liked my daughter Gangoo....."

"Liked your daughter? I confess I don't quite follow you. What has my business to do with your daughter?"

"Why? Didn't you come specially to meet her?"

"You seem to be fond of joking, doctor. I came to see the Private Secretary to the Governor. I had an interview with him yesterday, and am to have another today. That's why I said my business is almost over. What should I have to do with your daughter? I'm already married, you know."

"What?"

"I said I'm already married. And if you can't believe my word, please meet Mrs. Bhargava."

He took out the photograph of a cinema actress which he had already placed in his coat-pocket, ready to be produced at the right moment.

The doctor gazed at the actress, moistening his lips as though he looked at a juicy fruit beyond reach. Then he asked Bhargava,

"But how did your uncle then write to me like that?"

"Like what? I only know that when I told him that I was leaving for Mahabaleshwar, he asked me not to stay in a

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hotel but with you, since you were an old friend of his. I've no idea what he wrote to you about me."

"I tell you, I had clearly suggested to him that I would be glad to have his nephew for a son-in-law. He wrote to me in return that this was quite a good idea indeed, and that he would send his nephew on a short visit to us."

Bhargava burst into a loud laughter. And although the doctor kept asking 'why?' the only reply he made was to go on laughing.

At last the doctor almost went down on his knees and prayed, "Please explain what makes you laugh so."

Bhargava then took compassion on him. "I can understand everything now. It's my love marriage that has led to all this misunderstanding."

"How do you mean?"

"It's like this, doctor. It's true that I'm married. And it's also true that my uncle doesn't know about it."

"Why?"

"Because I married this girl secretly."

"O.....!" wailed the doctor. And getting up he ran out of the room, like a man who had seen a ghost.

In that instant Bhargava vividly realised the feelings of a lamb miraculously rescued from the butcher's hands. He wanted to dance for sheer joy. At least to sing a merry tune in a full-throated voice. But he remembered that people who are granted interviews by the Private Secretary to the Governor do not do such things. He therefore went to his room, and began to take out the shaving set from his bag.

There—just near the shaving set—lay the book!

The book that he had found at the booking office!

Bhargava frowned and swore.

Round that little book he had woven no end of sweet dreams; and he had prepared a hundred sparkling witty remarks to be made when returning the book to its charming owner! But now all the dreams lay shattered. And all his clever remarks would remain unuttered!

He felt such a strong impulse to pick up that mocking book, and hurl it through the window.

But no. After all, the book belonged to Gangoo, and it was still his duty to return it to her. She may be ugly and undesira-



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ble. But that didn't give him a right to fling away the book that belonged to her. He had cleverly and finally squashed all chances of his being considered a suitor for her hand. And he had therefore no reason to bear any ill-will towards her. He must return her book.

There was a tinkle of bangles at the door.

Gangoo peeped in and asked, "O, are you alone? I thought father was here. Did he go to the hospital?"

"Yes." And showing her the book, Bhargava asked, "Is this yours?"

She took it from him, and with surprise and joy in her voice, replied, "Of course, it is my book. But how and where did *you* find it?"

Bhargava told her about the girl who had left the book at the window of the booking office.

Gangoo laughed. "O, I see. It's queer indeed for a girl to leave books at ticket windows. But Shobhana is queer girl, always doing something funny."

"Shobhana? Who's Shobhana?"

"She's a friend of mine. She took this book from me, lost it, searched for it for several days, and then started arguing that she had returned it to me. She's that clever to be sure. But now that I know what really happened to the book, I'd like to play a trick or two and have lots of fun out of Shobhana when she comes here....."

"What did you say? She's coming here?"

"Yes, of course. She's due to arrive here by the afternoon bus today."

"Good gracious!"

Gangoo didn't understand his words. But they evidently meant that Bhargava found himself in a queer fix. He had very successfully pretended that his business was over and that he was in a hurry to leave Mahabaleshwar. And now Shobhana would arrive in the afternoon, which meant that he would have a chance to begin his real business, and he would like to stay on for a few days more. How could he manage it all?

But he did.

The Governor's Private Secretary would not let him go. And how could he displease him? To have listened to Bhargava's account of how the Governor's Private Secretary urged

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him every day to prolong his stay would have been enough for anybody to suspect that he and the Secretary were together planning some big coupe in the administration of the Bombay Presidency!

And the funniest part of it all was that nobody knew when Bhargava actually went to the Government House, and saw the Secretary. For he danced attendance for all the twenty-four hours of the day on Shobhana, and the girl too seemed not only to like it but also to arrange for it cleverly.

On the day after her arrival, for instance, she went to his room and, showing him her mandolin, said,

"Will you please fix up a string to this? I know how to play. But I'm so hopeless when it comes to fixing a string."

Bhargava took the instrument from her, mounted the string and began to turn the key. But all his attention was rivetted on Shobhana. He turned the key almost like a savage, and—'twang'! The string snapped and rolled into a little coil.

Shobhana gave such a sweet peal of laughter. "Thank you indeed! That settles it. There's no hope of getting a new string here at Mahabaleshwar. Give me the mandolin. I'll lock it up in its case."

"But why? I might have a new string in my bag."

"O, you play the mandolin then?"

"Just a little."

"That's modesty, I suppose. Now you must not only fix up the string, but you must also first play to me."

"Yes, Your Highness. I'm an offender, and must take whatever penalty Your Highness imposes."

They both laughed, and never knew that while they played and sang and talked, hours passed by, and the shadows of trees in the courtyard stretched longer, and the tops of houses began to glisten with the soft red light of the setting sun.

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The Private Secretary to the Governor—God bless him!—permitted Bhargava to leave Mahabaleshwar exactly on the day when Shobhana declared her intention of going back to Bombay.

The two young people naturally travelled together.

As the Bori Bunder station was approaching, Shobhana said to Bhargava, "Now you must come to us often. You've promised to teach me the mandolin. You mustn't forget."

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"O, now, how can I forget? But you too must occasionally come to my humble abode."

"Of course, why not? I so much wish to get to know Mrs. Bhargava."

Mrs. Bhargava !.....

Ah, yes. There was a Mrs. Bhargava, he remembered.....

And now she was going to prove very troublesome!

Shobhana had evidently had talks with Gangoo or her father, and believed that he was married.

This explained, it now occurred to Bhargava, why although Shobhana had been very sweet to him during her stay at Mahabaleshwar, she had sort of retired in a shell and frowned whenever he had purposely put a ring of intimacy in his talk.

Ah, dash it! This fictitious wife whom he had created as a weapon against Gangoo was going to make a mess of his love affair.

For a moment Bhargava thought of making a clean breast of everything, and telling Shobhana.....

But no, he told himself, he had rather wait for a suitable opportunity. Haste would not exactly be the best policy. He therefore only said,

"O certainly, certainly. You'll get to know Mrs. Bhargava. I'm sure you two will like each other very much."

"Really? Is she very loving?"

"Very. In fact she seems to be made exactly to your pattern."

During the week that followed, Bhargava paid several visits to Shobhana's house. He liked her people, and they too all liked him. Shobhana began to wonder, however, why he didn't propose to take her to his house. At last she said to him,

"Why not bring Mrs. Bhargava to us tomorrow? Don't you remember you promised to introduce her to me?"

"I know, I know.....er...but the trouble is..."

"Don't invent any excuses. If you don't want to bring Mrs. Bhargava here, I shall go with you and call on her. Shall I?"

"Excellent. But I must warn you, Shobhana, that you must come a little prepared if you really want to know Mrs. Bhargava."

"Prepared? What do you mean? Prepared for what?"

"You must forgive me, I can't explain. I can only say that you'll have to make up your mind before coming to my house."

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Innocent Shobhana grew emphatic and said, "Yes, yes. I have made up my mind."

"If you have, I have. And that would settle everything. But look here, write on this paper that we have both made up our minds....."

Shobhana brushed aside the paper. "You're the limit really when you start joking. Why do you want me to write down my resolve?"

"Lest you may go back upon it later." He laughed.

Shobhana felt a little confused. What did he exactly mean by his words? And why did he laugh so?

On the next day Bhargava took Shobhana to his house. But he kept talking to her in her room, and showed no intention of calling Mrs. Bhargava to meet her.

With a view to suggest his duty, Shobhana looked at the photographs in the room, and asked, "Which is Mrs. Bhargava's photograph?"

"I haven't had her photographed as yet."

"Don't fool me. I know you showed Mrs. Bhargava's photograph to Gangoo's father."

"O that photograph, you mean? Er.....but as it happens, Mrs. Bhargava has gone away to her mother."

"Why didn't you tell me so then yesterday?"

"I forgot all about it. And today I've had very glad tidings."

"Is Mrs. Bhargava returning?"

"No. She.....er.....died."

And he laughed.

Shobhana felt shocked and astounded.

She couldn't bear the sight of this man laughing at the sad demise of his wife.

With a stern frown she remarked, "I thought you loved Mrs. Bhargava."

Bhargava moved near her, and tried to take her hand in his. But she jerked his hand, and moved away.

"I had taken you for a gentleman," she hissed. "But what a fool I was. You laugh at your wife's death, and also insult a girl like me! I had imagined you to be very loving and kind-hearted and respectable. But you seem to be a wolf under a sheepskin. I don't wish to stay here for a moment."

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She was about to walk out of the room.

But Bhargava held her, and pleaded, with a smile on his lips,

"Please, for God's sake, please listen to me."

Shobhana shot an angry glance at him.

But Bhargava didn't let her go. In a very soft and persuasive voice he said:

"Look here, Shobhana, don't misjudge me. Listen. I had created a fictitious wife, and today I killed her. Where's the hard-heartedness if I laugh at her death? And how do I cease to be honourable if I hold the hand of the girl I love, because I want to ask her to be my wife?"

He held both her hands now, and looked at her with all the soft, tender appeal of true love.

Shobhana felt a strange wave of happiness sweep over her. But she couldn't help asking in surprise,

"What do you mean? Created a fictitious wife?"

"Yes, I'll tell you everything."

And he told her the whole story.

Shobhana laughed till her sides ached.

"Now, Shobhana," said Bhargava, "I'll call my mother."

"Why for?"

"It's like this. Just as I had promised to show you my wife, I had also promised mother. You and mother will now both see her at once. I'll bring mother here, so that she can see you. And I'll make you stand here before the big mirror, so that you can have a look at my future queen."

He almost lifted and carried her across the room.

Shobhana sweetly protested,

"But you seem to take my consent for granted. When did I give it?"

"Ah, a woman's first consent is never given. It's to be taken thus."

He pressed her hands and bent down to kiss them.

Shobhana overlooked this liberty. That is, she closed her eyes.

# *Jamsetji, the Pioneer*

BY P. R. RAMACHANDRA RAO

On the northern steppes of Turkestan, at the estuary of the Oxus, one mighty branch of the Indo-European family lingered for centuries before the birth of Christ. It split and moved eastward and westward. The eastern wing crossed the Hindukush and founded the great Indian civilisation. The western peopled the Iranian plateau and burgeoned into the Persian Empire. The rise of Islam towards the eighth century culminated in a predatory militarism; Arab armies tramped across the Iranian corridor, conquering and proselytising. Religious persecution ran high. The Zoroastrian Persians cowered before the Arab onslaught. Some few crossed the Gulf and fled in panic to distant Gujarat. There they lingered, took root, and fourished.

The zealous refugees had carried to their land of exile invaluable fragments of a treasured scripture. On the *Zend-Avesta* was built a liturgy which fostered a hereditary priest-class.

For over eight hundred years the modest little town of Navsari had been the seat of the priestly dynasties. One stock attained pre-eminence. Sheriar, its progenitor, was the founder of an opulent genealogy and his worthy scions filled with distinction the office of the High Priest of the Navsari see. One hot-tempered descendant emphasised the family trait and earned for his progeny the immortal nick-name of Tata, which means 'peppery.' And Tatas they have remained ever afterwards.

The fire that kindled a once mighty empire which overran Asia and Egypt, and only recoiled from the European continent at Salamis, smouldered beneath the placid contentment of the Tata dynasty. Heritage will out.

In 1839 a child was born and a new chapter was written in the industrial history of India. It was the advent of Jamsetji<sup>1</sup> Nusserwanji Tata.

The Bar is at once the pitfall and the pinnacle of secular careers, and it was by a veritable chance that Jamsetji stumbled out of the solicitor's chambers. For, to the aspiring

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<sup>1</sup> I have adopted Tata's own spelling.

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Elphinstonian—Ramakrishna Bhandarkar and Dinshaw Wacha were there with him—the learned profession seemed clearly marked out. But the parental firm of Nusserwanji Tata was expanding beyond the seas; the China trade brought unprecedented gains and there was need of an ardent assistant. Jamsetji stood at the cross-roads and with striking decision embarked the ship to Hongkong. The profession of law had lost another star.

Then President Lincoln was waging his noble battle for enslaved humanity. The gigantic cotton-fields of the South lay waste. Lancashire placed an embargo upon the American raw material. It was India's opportunity. The price of staple shot up; gold came pouring in. A hectic fever of speculation seized the cotton chiefs. Money overflowed crazily into lavish concerns. Premchand Roychand, a cotton-broker of genius, was the archangel of this mad careering. He spread his business nets far and wide. The firm of Tata had cast their lot with this soaring adventurer. And then the bubble burst. In 1865 General Lee surrendered the South. Shares fell and the web of speculation was torn in shreds. Mighty commercial houses tottered to their fall. The Tatas were nearly swept away. But on the high seas of disaster they encountered succour. Sir Robert Napier's god-send expedition to Magdala made commissariat contracting a handsome concern, and the Tatas took fortune by the forelock. Jamsetji had served his commercial apprenticeship.

A striking era in the cotton industry was opening out. Towards 1850 one Cowasji Nanabhai Davar had established the first cotton mill in Bombay and some fifteen years afterwards the city was bidding fair to become the Indian 'Cottonopolis.' Yet, the industry was still in its infancy; only a dozen murky chimneys projected into the sky. The great Indian textile traditions had long died out. India, once the cotton manufactory of the civilised world, had become the agricultural farm of England. Industry stirred again, not indeed in the ancient manner, but after Western example. Colossal fortunes were being piled in the Occident.

But the Indian factory industry was primitive and clumsy. Out-dated mills worked at the caprice of fitful labour. An 'industrial' population was yet to be born. The dispossessed artisans had fled to the land for a scrambling existence. Transport was sluggish. The Railways were yet straggling

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across the peninsula. Heavy ships lugged wearily on the ocean. Steam navigation was unknown. Haulage was rudimentary. India was a century behind.

Jamsetji was thirty-five. His prescient genius was fired by the immense possibilities of the cotton trade. At Manchester he had watched the rolling mills pour out the vast fabric that clothed the tropical peoples. Japan was rearing herself on a solid textile tradition. The vision of an industrial India rose in his mind tier on tier. It was no chimera. Behind that impressive form, behind those deep-set eyes, the man of action was shaping.

Tata struck out an epoch-making path. Bombay, remote from the cotton tracts, had been clung to in superstitious veneration. For the first time he saw, if the industry was to flourish, it had to be within reach of the raw material and the channels of distribution. Nagpur suited excellently. The city was a cotton centre, the Warora coal mines were not far off, and the manufactured product could be dispersed at once by the radiating railways. There was much scepticism of the choice. People said that Tata was sinking gold. But they were wrong. He had sunk earth and taken out gold. The Empress Mills were a roaring success.

Jamsetji's expert mind had a special facility in mastering manufacturing systems. He made endless researches. He was quick to take up a new idea or a new process. He adopted the ring spindle while yet it was struggling into its own in England and America. He had an uncanny instinct for the choice of the right subordinates. His discovery of Bezonji Dadabhai was a stroke of genius; the assistant goods traffic superintendent was sublimated into the *facile princeps* of the cotton industry.

One of the marvels of industrial alchemy was the 'Swadeshi' Mill. When Tata took up the 'Dharamsi' it was a ramshackle concern. The machines creaked. Labour came and went, stole, struck, and rioted. The parasitic agents flourished on a disastrous commission. Tata had committed a blunder. The thoughtless venture brought his firm into jeopardy. But he took the helm at once. He scrapped the machinery, he scrapped the men, and he scrapped the commission. He staked his all. Out of the debris a magnificent structure was reared. The caterpillar



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had turned butterfly. Those that had shaken their heads hung them down in abashment.

But a ruinous handicap constricted the cotton trade. India was not her own carrier; the Peninsular monopolised the merchant fleet. Their rates were excessive and grossly preferential. Tata dreamed of an Indian mercantile marine. Even in 1800 it was thought that we could still offer models to Europe in the art of ship-construction, and a century earlier Indian shipping sailed to the Thames under the convoy of British frigates. But those days had gone by. Tata decided to run his own ships. He contracted with the Nippon Yusen Kaisha for the Far Eastern trade. Then began the nefarious 'war of freights.' The Peninsular cut rates to a ruinous level. They went further and discredited Tata's merchantmen in the insurance market. Tata flared up. He protested and he complained. But the Government refused to intervene. His Indian friends betrayed him and fell off one by one. Tata retired from the combat beaten clumsily. The adversary had hit below the belt. The 'Tata line' was rudely scrapped.

The cotton mill industry was the *magnum opus* of Jamsetji's life. It is his signal title to recognition. It brought him the mine of his colossal benefactions. His later projects matured in after years; they were posthumous fulfilments. In the opening years of modern Indian industrialism, Tata looms a lone, titanic figure. He has had no commensurable successor. He was imbued with the missionary spirit in industry. He sought to broaden the economic bases of Indian advancement. He strove to free our industry from its primitive empiricism. His genius functioned in the epic style. He scrawled vast designs on the eternity of Time. He was lured by the giant strides of Western mechanisation. The allurements were irresistible. He essayed to outrival the West.

Almost before Tata's eyes our splendid industrial heritage was becoming extinct. The smothered artisan writhed and fell back to the soil. Millions of looms were crumbling because of disuse. The famished craftsmen looked pitifully at the deluging foreign cheap stuff that was taking their bread away. Their fingers itched while a torment seized their stomachs. Their gorgeous workmanship of better days mocked at them in tatters. Their faithless patrons had cruelly divorced them and were court-

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ing the tinsel material from across the seas. The scramble on the soil was a fragmentation of sustenance, and life was becoming insupportable.

But Tata thought of mills, of tons of fabric, and the foreign dumping. He conceived of the artisans as labour for his factories. But he thought of them kindly; his eyes welled up with tears when he spoke of their hardships. He thought of them in terms of sick benefit funds, co-operative societies, creches, recreations and emulative rewards. The web was woven round the flies. The fact was, then in India, the industrial 'bourgeoisie' was swelling its grizzard. It was the dawn of the capitalist era. The masses were just 'labour.'

Man in the midmost ocean of Time foams for a moment and is gone. The transmitted impetus of the expiring wave fringes the shore by a succession of existences. But we are obsessed by our little systems. Our truncated lives in supreme egotism circumscribe the magnitude of our aspiring endeavours. Jamsetji was exempt from this infirmity of noble minds.

By 1895 his business was moving like a well-oiled machine. Though in the industrial firmament 'certain stars shot madly from their spheres' the firm of Tata shone steadily and bright. His son Dorabji had become an invaluable co-adjutor. His trusty lieutenants, Bezonji and Padshah, did their appointed work. Jamsetji had set the stage and the play was moving with splendid precision. He was merely content to hold the strings. He was the engineering force, the conceiving genius. His mighty mind never paused to lounge by his achievements; it marched. For, vast projects were oppressing his mind. This idea-intoxicated man felt a fever in his blood.

The commercial revolutions of the nineteenth century were born of the application of science to industry. America, Germany and Japan were rising upon this twin foundation. The vast undeveloped resources of India, Tata saw, needed scientific investigation. So could the resultant industrial expansion broaden the avenues of occupation. Money he had in abundance. But he did not let in 'empty buckets into empty wells.' Patch-work philanthropy was not his line. There is a service which ministers at the bottom of the social pyramid; there is another which functions at the top. To lift up the best and the most gifted was to Tata the greatest service to

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the country. The culmination of this ideology was the establishment of the Indian Institute of Science.

In 1889 the Indian colleges were cramming shops, perniciously examinational. Tata strove to transplant in our institutions the spirit somewhat of the German seminar. The intellect of Europe was ransacked for suggestions. In Burjorji Padshah Tata discovered an astute investigator. Lord Curzon was Viceroy and he was setting his mind to the reconstruction of Indian education. Sir William Ramsay, the celebrated chemist, was commissioned to thresh out the immense project.

But the Institute was in the main a posthumous accomplishment. At the entrance to the classical structure in grey granite stands a monument by Bayes. The figures of Jove, Vulcan, Minerva and Calliope are cast in relief. In the centre is the lamp of learning. On the top of all is a commanding statue in bronze of the modest benefactor. That man had done good by stealth.

By a contemporary logic Jamsetji perceived that iron was the first link in production. Without iron there could be no tools, and without machinery there could be no industry. The iron deposits of India lay immense and unexplored; their utilisation was Tata's haunting passion. Time was when the reputed Damascus blades were fashioned out of Indian steel. The famous Iron Column at Delhi is an astounding monument to our metallurgical skill. In 1888 the iron trade was mounting rapidly throughout the world. The railways had broken up India and the beginnings of large-scale industry looked eagerly towards iron and coal deposits. Tata's mind was quick to act. But private enterprise then was a hazardous activity; in Lord Lawrence's significant phrase it meant robbing the Government! Tata forged notwithstanding. The frigid bonds were slowly relaxing and a wiser policy had reformed the scandalous mining regulations. With his habitual thoroughness Tata examined the project. He made a pilgrimage of investigation through Europe and America. America hailed him as the 'Pierpont Morgan of the East.' He was an object of adulation, of flaring head-lines. An enterprising periodical christened him 'John N. Tata!' He was a lavish shopper, but he always bought with a high purpose, that India might know of the products abroad. American salesmen smiled knowingly on the Indian magnate. In Cleveland,

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the pivot of American steel, Senator Hanna extended to Tata a gorgeous welcome. He moved restlessly from one iron centre to another, wholly immersed in the iron idea. He did not go out even sight-seeing. He straightway returned to India to launch the scheme. But, already his strength was ebbing and the colossal charge was committed to Dorabji. Tata stood by and watched the project. He gave it life, he gave it funds, and he gave it brains. The good that men do sometimes lives after them. Beyond the rice-fields of Bengal, across the ferruginous mountains of Chota Nagpur, the steel city of Jamshedpur rises a wondrous phenomenon, a lasting triumph of the prescient genius of Jamsetji Tata.

In 1860 the city of Bombay was a 'squalid Venice of sewage canals.' The streets closed in, narrow and congested. Houses towered haphazard flanking the filthy gullies. Dingy chawls were huddled beside scrambling cattle-sheds. But a generation of public-spirited citizens arose who saw the birth of a new city. The immense fortunes made during the cotton boom, indeed, overflowed crazily but coursed sometimes through substantial veins of civic improvement. The Fort, an erstwhile neglected tract, blossomed into a magnificent quarter of imposing structures. On the heights, splendid residential estates were carved out.

When the speculative fever was on, Premchand Roychand launched the Back Bay Reclamation Scheme. But in the general dissolution following the cotton debacle, the Company collapsed. Tata sighed wearily at the waters sweep the beautiful coastline of unredeemed marsh. He was as yet on the threshold of his momentous career; but once on the pinnacle he applied himself unstintedly to municipal progress. He loved the city with an intense civic pride. He strove ceaselessly to beautify Bombay. He made of building construction a fine art. He had an impeccable architectural taste and he was self-willed. But he built wisely, combining exquisitely business with service. The Taj Mahal Hotel was reared primarily out of patriotic motives; it was a commercial proposition in the second instance. To Tata, the Taj was a national investment.

Jamsetji was a visionary, imaginative essentially in mould. But then he did not write his aerial visions or sing them; he built them concretely, in brick and mortar. But some of his

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projects did not concretise ; they ended in shreds or died still-born in his mind. Tata's reclamation schemes are tinged with a frustrated pathos. His aesthetic mind endeavoured to reconstruct Bombay on the Venetian model. Salsette, Bandra and Mahim with their intersecting creeks were to be the studded jewels of his artistic city. To convert those low-lying malarial swamps into inhabitable tracts, he battled manfully against a series of building fines and official imputations. He was marked out as the spokesman of a guild of 'capitalist investors.' There was no helping. It was a thankless task. A broken arc of his rounded ambition was at last accomplished at Juhu. A splendid fore-shore of finely divided sand runs some four miles by a splashing sea across a variegated landscape, and somewhere on those sands is the invisible impress of Jamsetji Tata.

The great business adventurers, says Laski, "have the big conceptions, the restless temperament, the unwearied experimentalism, of the great scientist and the great explorer." They are eager to satisfy the creative urge. They respond to the impulse of power, not of profit. Tata went further. He responded foremost to the impulse of service. He experimented ceaselessly, ever seeking new ranges. No project was too small for his titanic mind. He introduced the Japanese silk industry into Mysore. He strove to acclimatise the long-stapled Egyptian cotton in India, to send the mango to the London market, to develop artesian wells and cold storage. To Tata, the visionary, life showed but half.

The Western Ghats rise an impressive rampart, all but fringing the coast-line of the Arabian Sea. On the summit of the hills falls, perhaps the heaviest rainfall in the world. The strip of basin is a splendid catchment area with immense hydraulic possibilities. For thirty years Tata revolved the hydro-electric project in his mind ; it only needed a David Gostling to give form to his dream. The enormous waterfall was to be collected in storage lakes and conducted to the Kandala plateau, then forced through a descent of eight hundred feet to the bottom of the valley at Khopoli, so generating a colossal electrical energy which could be transmitted to Bombay to drive the commercial world. It was a giant scheme ; it lay through vast mountains and valleys. It needed a mind as vast to see it through. But the project was spread among two generations

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of the Tatas; it was given to Sir Dorabji to fulfil the 'inestimable legacy' of his great father.

Jamsetji lived and died Nature's modest gentleman. He received no title. He shunned the footlights. He never made a public speech in his life. He matured during those momentous years when the Indian nation was rediscovering her soul. The Indian National Congress was being born. Tata was present at its inception and blessed it. He supported our political aspirations in his own reticent way. Indeed, his life was one patriotic endeavour. Wealth with him was never an end in itself, Sir Dorabji said of him; it was a by-product of his gigantic schemes for national advancement. He had the good of India foremost at heart; he laboured for it in his inimitably grand way. He was a premature off-spring of the Indian national genius, precocious and prescient. "He united the daring courage of the American captain of industry with the German passion for details." He had an excellent head for statistics; a formidable army of stored-up figures issued forth to do service in the Bimetallic War. He thrashed sycophancy with the same relentless rigour. He was abhorrent of political discrimination or caste domination. His ample mind overflowed national frontiers. He was a citizen of the world. He travelled its highways with a passion for knowledge and curiosity. Yet he traversed unobtrusively.

The "merchant prince, manufacturer, and importer, and likewise philanthropist, scholar and philosopher" passed away at Nauheim on May 19th, 1904. His esurient indiscretions brought on an early end. "If you cannot make (the family name) greater," was the Patriarch's last injunction, "at least preserve it."

Jamsetji is not dead. Men like Tata never die.

"Somewhere, surely, afar,  
In the sounding labour-house vast  
Of being, is practised that strength,  
Zealous, beneficent, firm."

# *The Flute-Player*

BY PURASU BALAKRISHNAN

(Translated from Tamil by the Author)

(1)

I remember it as though it were only yesterday. It was at a wedding celebrated at some magnate's somewhere. My Master had been invited there to give a performance on the flute. As luck would have it, I had accompanied him on that occasion.

The day after our performance, the magnate took it into his head to get up a Gesture-Dance. If one has money to please one's fancy with, what cannot one do?.....It was at that Dance that I lost my young heart to a maiden.

Her name was Ratnambal. It was my good fortune that she also happened to come there. The magnate tried all he could to make my Master play to her Dance. But it was in vain. My Master would never consent to suffer that indignity. Even today I cannot understand why he should have been so stubborn. In his opinion, nothing more disgraceful could befall a musician of repute than to play to a woman, and that to a dancing-girl.

For my part I had no such ideas or scruples. Music was my profession; and I would let no opportunity slip by when I could demonstrate my talent. As the saying goes, why reject the Goddess Lakshmi when she comes to you of her own accord? And so I asked the rich man if I would be permitted to play in place of my Master.

At this my Master flew all into a flutter. That very night he left the place for home. I stayed behind.

The next day the Gesture-Dance came off. It was the most blessed day of my life.

To a vast and breathless audience Ratnambal rendered 'Abhinaya' and danced 'Bharata Natya,' while I accompanied her on the flute.

They spoke very flatteringly of our performance that day. They said that the 'Natya' was matched only by the Flute, and

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the Flute only by the 'Natya.' But I knew nothing of this. Ratnambal too knew nothing. How could we know anything indeed, when we had forgotten ourselves entirely?

At that time I thought: "The Soul of Music is Bhava (emotion); while 'Abinaya' and 'Natya' constitute 'Bhava' itself. And so, how vitally sustaining are Music and Dancing to each other! To sever one from the other is impossible. Without the one the other will not grow. How wonderful! Is not the bond which unites me and Ratnambal the same as that which unites our Arts too?" And I was pleased with the thought.

So wonderful indeed did this union of our souls appear to me that I could hardly keep the thought to myself and I must needs share it with Ratnambal. It was a new wave swelling and surging within me.

But on that very day I had become removed from my Master. Even at the time of his death he did not forgive me. He died two months after this incident. May his soul find peace in Heaven, which had not found love on earth!

### (2)

I am not one of those who affect false humility with regard to themselves. I do rate my talent highly as a flute-player. Like my Master I also regard myself with dignity and even with pride. But all these feelings, and the root of all these, namely that high consciousness 'I,' I discarded completely and surrendered to Ratnambal. To her I dedicated my body soul, and talent, and everything mine. How many would have known the heart-searchings and the heavings and the tumults of the mind which this surrender meant? Let me but repeat that though I consider myself to be a servant of my Art, I am far from being humble. I am proud—rather too proud—of my talent. And yet for her sake I stifled all feelings of self-assertion, and curbed my over-soaring spirit in being but an accompanist to her. Of all his pupils my Master had set the highest opinion and the greatest hope on me. Indeed, on many occasions, he had expressed this quite plainly and openly. Under such good auspices did I enter the arena of Music; and I won the almost immediate regard of the public. My mind continually rebelled against me, prompting me to endeavour to be, just like my Master, a single sun in a spacious



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sky, unequalled and supreme. When at last I did begin my career in music anew, driven thither by a malicious Fate, the seal of approval which the public set on my talent for music, showed that my former opinion of myself was true. And yet, for nearly one year, I remained an unknown accompanist to Ratnambal.

### (3)

I had been accompanist to her for not more than six months when my troubles began. Cough and sputum, and in the sputum, blood. I was told that it was tuberculosis. Till then Ratnambal and I had been very loving indeed. The days had passed by like a dream of pure delight. Ah, happy blissful days! What fondness, what endearment, what gay words which flowed endlessly! 'Abhinaya' and Song reigned supreme in the house. Coquettishly, in her hand she would take mine, as though it were a parrot, and wonder what exquisite melody could flow from those finger-tips, when they danced on the bamboo.....

I was then twenty and she was seventeen. She was a divinely beautiful woman, beautiful to perfection.....while I fell into the clutches of an ugly disease. It was a mean trick played on me by Fate, a cruel trick.....

When she learnt that I had caught tuberculosis, a change came upon her. Was it dread? Only then we had agreed to get married. But now she said: "Why hurry? Certainly your health is much more important just now than marriage. And so you must take the utmost care of your health. Please do. After all, the marriage can wait." And thus she almost sent me away to attend to my health. However, I continued to be accompanist to her for three months more. But within that time my disease developed rapidly. The doctors said that to continue playing on the flute would be merely beating and tearing the diseased lungs to pieces. They said that one might as well yoke a diseased horse to a cart and goad it on. Ratnambal had told me the same thing even earlier. And so I could not play on the flute any longer.

I left Ratnambal and returned to my place. For one year I lay bed-ridden with my disease. Twelve long months. And all the time Ratnambal never came to see me; no, not once. Even after I had got over the disease, the doctors said that I should

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have complete rest for six months more, and that never thereafter should I exert myself unduly or play on the flute. All my ideals and aspirations, and all the innermost longings of my soul, tumbled down in a moment, like a house of cards.

### (4)

For one year and a half after I had left Ratnambal, I dragged out a weary existence, one lifeless day following another in dull succession. And then I went to see her myself, unbidden. My mind which had already been broken, split now into a hundred pieces. What a change! Oh, that I never knew that change like this could come over people! But why blame her? What can come out of that? I must blame only myself. I must bemoan only my fate. Why did that cursed disease come upon me at such an early age? Or, having come upon me, why did it not kill me at once? Why did it spare me, now that she holds me like an untouchable? In her eyes, it is pity which I discern—and also a dread which makes them strangely tremulous. How can I hereafter speak to her of love, or breathe soft words to her? Even when I took leave of her saying, "I go to come again,"<sup>1</sup> she did not offer me one little word of consolation. Before that form of splendid loveliness, I who had been emaciated into a stick, found it painful to stand any longer, and I returned home, an utterly broken man.

The next day some old woman came seeking me, with a letter for me. It was the last blow, and it fell right on my head. The very thing I had dreaded, happened. The letter was from Ratnambal. She had written to me that she was deeply sorry for me, but that only a feeling of pity for me entered her mind, and nought else did; that she had not been able to bring herself to speak out her mind to me in person on the previous day; and that now, like one who had done some grievous wrong, she was trying to hide herself behind a letter; and that with tears in her eyes, she now wrote that she could not marry me. I read the letter mechanically, dead to everything around me. After I had finished the letter, when I turned round, the old woman was not there. She had disappeared so promptly. I was to be denied even the least chance for one last word! Helplessly I tore the letter to pieces and flung the bits away.

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<sup>1</sup> The conventional leave-taking.

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But my mind which had been shattered into a hundred fragments, remained as disconsolate as ever.

(5)

Thereafter life lost all its savour for me. A new spirit of apathy and renunciation seized me. The doctors had warned me that to play on the flute would be certain death to me. But now anger and bitterness arose in me towards them. What was my life now worth? What could be its meaning or its purpose hereafter? It was just like the rag which we throw away in our homes to cleanse the ground with. Yes, no more than a discarded rag! There was nothing now to tempt me to live. The world had lost its very meaning for me. What did it matter whether I lived or died?

I took out my flute again from its dainty little box where it had been reposing silently till then. I moistened my lips, one with the other, and poising the flute on my fingers, I began to play. And as in the olden times came the first three notes "Sa-Pa-Sa." But beyond that I could not go. Overpowering tears, streaming down from my eyes, made me weak and helpless like a woman. Unable to play anything at all, I laid the flute aside and flung myself into my bed. But my sorrow rose again like a lump into my throat. And I simply hugged the flute to my breast, overcome by an infinite melancholy and regret at the thought that I had been obliged to give it up so long. I felt even like a mother who, having lost her child, comes upon it at last and hugs it to her breast with a renewed love which bursts through her tears.....

At last with a spirit of *vairagya* I resolved to offer a brave challenge to Fate. I threw myself once more arduously into the musician's life. I gave a number of performances which brought me my reputation. I won the praise which is dear to every pupil, that I was worthy of my Master, and thus I kept unsullied his fair name.

For five years I careered triumphantly in the realm of music. All these years, music was my only consolation, the only life-giving power for me. Sometimes I would laugh like a mad man—"Koo koo!"—and with the flute in my hand exclaim, "Aie, you Demon of Disease! You unwanted, ill-natured thing! Do you think you can get at me through my flute? No, I tell you, it is

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impossible, you fool! Chich-chi! Get away! Know then, my flute is in fact my sole weapon against you! It is my medicine, my panacea, my nectar! Get away, you Idiot Disease! Dare you stand before my flute still?—Hm, you are a miserable fool! Begone, begone at once!" and I would flourish the flute in a frenzy, as though it were Bhima's mace, imagining the Demon before me. But the next moment, I would check myself, frightened at the thought, "Am I getting wrong in my mind too?"

### (6)

During these five years I had given numberless performances. But only one, from among them all, stands out fresh and clear in my memory still. So deeply has it sunk into my soul.

It was the middle of that performance and it was the violinist's turn. Keeping the time for him with my hands, I turned to his side to cheer him. My eyes stayed where they turned, motionless and immovable. There, on that side, near me, sat my Ratnambal. Yes, it was Ratnambal herself, sitting there!

My heart throbbed at once within me and brimmed over with silent red drops of sorrow. I laid the flute to my lips again and began to play. And the song came gushing forth, like a cascade, flowing irresistibly. And I forgot the song completely, and I forgot myself too. And yet, wonderfully, the strains flowed on. The chest heaved and swelled to the rushing air, the lips kissed and hung on the flute, the fingers played and danced on the bamboo, like birds with lives of their own; and the melody of the flute flowed and filled the entire hall. But my mind was not with these things.....

I remembered only that long-past night when I, left helpless and loveless and broken-hearted, wept like a woman, shedding tears, hugging the flute to my breast. All else was forgotten. And only that night of utter anguish and agony came back to my mind. For that alone was reality to me, the rest was all illusion, mere illusion.....

In the Sabha too, as had happened on that night, tears poured down helplessly from my eyes. It did not occur to me that, in the glare of the electric lights, the audience would certainly perceive those drops running down my cheeks. But those tears washed my grief away somewhat and soothed me a little. Strangely and wonderfully, when I had shed those tears, an un-

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known calm came glowing down upon me; and it appeared to me as if those tears had washed some rust off my mind, making it peculiarly roomy and bright.....

### (7)

I had a dream that night. Oh God, would that I could spend my whole life in that dream! This yearning consumes me utterly! That night, as I lay in sorrow on my bed, she who came to the performance, came to my side to weep. She shed piteous tears, bewailing her cruelty; she implored and begged me to forgive her and to accept her. But in my sad heart was a firmness too. What a miserable fate was mine! *She loved not me; she loved only my flute.* How could this give peace to my soul; how could this bring solace to my full and deep love? Oh God, could she not love me for my love, and not for my music?..... Though I had such thoughts as these in my mind, when she came there of her own accord, and stood before me with tears in her eyes, madly I gathered her in my arms and embraced her, with a love burning and leaping like fire..... Again tears rose into my eyes. How weak of heart and tearful by nature—like a woman—I had become, I thought. At this I opened my eyes—and found no Ratnambal by my side. There was nobody there, none in the room; I was there alone, lying on my bed; and on me lay my flute; and it was the flute I was hugging to my breast, not Ratnambal .....

# *Telugu Poetry—Vijayanagara and After*

BY K. LAKSHMI RANJANAM, M.A.

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With the passing away of Srinadha the age of the Purana is at an end, and a new literary age known as the Prabandha period or the Romantic school in Telugu poetry, is at hand. The Prabandha marks a new era in Telugu literature, like the first Romantic movement in English literature. Englishmen of the Elizabethan age were not entirely satisfied with translations from Italian literature and from the ancient classics. The rising spirit of the age sought expression in new channels, original and indigenous,—something which Englishmen could exhibit to the world as their very own. This called forth the great achievement of Spenser, Shakespeare, Marlowe and Bacon, and a host of others. Andhra society also reached its meridian in the days of the Vijayanagara Empire. The Andhra sword overran and ruled the whole of South India. The traditional rivals, the Bahmani kings, were held at bay. Like the Englishmen of the 16th century in their mortal struggle with Spain, the Andhras came off successful in their feuds with their Bahmani rivals. The heroism of the age excited the imagination of the poets, and we have a noble outburst of the poetic genius. Patriotism was the dominant note in the Telugu poetry of the halcyon days of Krishnadeva-Raya, as in the English poetry of the age of Queen Elizabeth. The Prabandha is an original creation of the Telugu people of this age.

The previous age was content with translations from Sanskrit. Instruction was the aim of the poet. The society was simple and religious minded. It demanded little more than a praise of Dharma and Virtue. The Vijayanagara Empire saw the birth of a Telugu society which enjoyed the life on this green planet for what it was worth. Prosperity and plenty flowed in

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<sup>1</sup> The two previous articles appeared in *Triveni* for April and June, 1937.

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the wake of a settled government. When people have ease and plenty, they turn their minds towards beauty and art. Sweet thoughts and creations delight them and they chase idle hours in the company of the artist and the musician. The fine arts take the place of simple religion and simple manners. Beauty (Kama) succeeds to the pedestal of Virtue (Dharma).

The Vijayanagara Empire revived Telugu art and music and brought them to the highest pitch. Kings patronised the poets and lavished gifts on them. Emperor Krishnadeva-Raya's name is immortalised in the annals of Telugu history for the many-sided glory of his reign. He, like Samudra-Gupta, was an invincible conqueror. To glory in the field of battle he combined a love of art and poetry, which can be said of only a few of the rulers of the world. He was himself a poet of eminence. His *Amukta Malyada* is a model Prabandha. The style of Krishnadeva-Raya was pitched to the tune of the highest scholarship. There is a wealth of local colouring in his work. The dress and manners of the age, the tasty dishes and the elegant home-life, the religious controversies, the hospitality of Vaishnava Bhaktas, all find a faithful expression in his poetry. Emperor as he was, we find Krishnadeva-Raya a close observer of the oddities of the social life around him, and he deemed them fit subjects for his art. His fondness for faithful depiction of social life may be here illustrated. Describing Vishnu-Chitta, the simple-minded Vaishnava devotee, the Emperor-Poet says that he used to store fuel, properly dried, lest his beloved wife should find the kitchen full of smoke issuing from raw wood in the rains, for he could not bear the sight of water in her dark eyes. The exigencies of the busy life of a statesman and ruler did not allow him leisure enough to polish his language, and his thoughts are occasionally obscured by recondite expression and the use of provincialisms. Krishnadeva-Raya as a patron of letters is often compared to Bhoja of Sanskrit literature. His court was adorned by the greatest poets of the Prabandha school, Peddana, Timmana, Dhurjati, Mallana and others. One of them, Peddana, describes how the Emperor honoured poets: "The Emperor would get the elephant to kneel if he met me casually in the way, and lift me up to the howdah with his own hand. He gave me villages in the most fertile of districts. When he accepted the dedication of *Manu-*

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*charitra*, he lifted me in the palanquin and he himself was one of the bearers. He would call me Peddana, the Grandsire of Telugu Poetry."

Such being the great esteem the poets received at the hands of crowned heads, they could pursue their art undisturbed by the struggle for existence. To them life seems to have been one continuous, moonlit, ethereal experience, unruffled by the din and misery of ordinary toiling life. The heroes and heroines of the Prabandha age, with noble exceptions, are all stereotyped. Love in union is the favourite theme of poets. Starting with an elaborate description of the seat of the king - the hero—the poet leads the hero by any means to the vicinity of the lady-love, who in turn is lusciously described. Then start their amours and temporary separation and feigned grief, on which the poet lavishes much ingenuity of conceits. The final *denouement* is indeed a foregone conclusion and the lovers are united. The hero is often of the 'Dhira-Lalita' type, one who delights in the arts of peace. Thus the artistic taste of the age finds expression in heroes and heroines who lead luxurious and sentimental lives.

That is but one side of the medal. If there is something which is peculiarly the creation of the Andhra people, it is the Prabandha. It is characterised by originality in theme,—of course of the romantic type,—developed into a *denouement* through the necessary intermediate stages. Pathos is there, in the best of them, naively woven into the texture of the plot. Peddana, for instance, the master-craftsman of the early Prabandha school, created in his Varudhini the type of a progressive woman, whose love for her lover is passionate, and who when disappointment comes weeps bitter tears of anguish that wring the heart of the *Sahridaya* (the discerning reader). His *Manucharitra* is the most popular of the Prabandhas, pre-eminent alike in the novelty of the theme and the vigour of style. Peddana is also successful in characterisation, and his Pravara is the type of the orthodox Brahmin to whom penance is everything, and not even opportunity and a pair of dark eyes can shake the steadfastness of his virtue. Nandi Timmana of *Parijatapaharana* fame is renowned for his mellifluous style and the music of his numbers. He is the best representative of the artistic trend of the age. His Satya, the wife of Lord Krishna,



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is essentially a Telugu woman in her aristocratic temper. To her the idea of sharing the love of her husband with another woman is highly galling. The word, to Timmana, is as flexible a material as clay to the potter and he makes it yield to the subtleties of his suggestive genius. He is a great success in exploring the passionate soul of a woman and acquaints us with the throbbings of her heart under the effects of jealousy.

Two poets of the later Prabandha period deserve special mention. Pingali Surana and Murty belong to the historic era slightly prior to the battle of Talikota. Since Tikkana, no poet could lay claim to a sustained imagination and high creative genius in the same measure as Surana. He was a profound scholar and an effective wielder of Telugu idiom and Sanskrit phrase. The literary taste of the age was on the decline, and the passion for exploring the subtleties of a word was on the rise. A poet who could successfully use one word to mean several things at one time (*slesha*) came to be looked upon as an interesting prodigy, and Surana unwittingly attempted this kind of hybrid composition in the beginning, which established his name in the literary world. His patron said to him in the Prologue to *Raghava-Pandaviya*: "It is indeed a literary feat to compose one full verse capable of yielding a double meaning. I consider it a worthy exercise of your great learning to write a *kavya* with double meaning from the beginning to the end." Surana, in the earlier stages of his poetic career, seems to have attached importance to the jingling assonance of words and delighted to show off his scholarship. But with maturity of thought he came to dislike *slesha* and pun. His attention was increasingly set on the essentials of true poetry. *Kalapurnodayamu*, considered to be his masterpiece, is an illustration of his creative genius. The plot is quite novel and a pure creation of Surana. Plot-weaving seems to be a child's play with him. There are numberless threads in the canvas of his story which in the hands of a less skilful weaver would have landed the reader in a maze of inconsistencies. But Surana's plot is so well managed in details and so well-knit that it gives the impression of unity in treatment. Another virtue of our poet is his skill in dramatisation of a story. Since Tikkana, the merits of the dramatic treatment of a theme seem to have been unrealised. He begins the story in quite a dramatic way;

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two lovers open the scene with a conversation and straightaway the seeds of the plot are sown in their very first utterances. The riddle that he throws out in the opening scenes takes us to the end of the story for its unravelling, and thus he sustains the interest of the reader to the last. Herein lies his art, that unlike in other Prabandhas the ending is a secret of the author and not a foregone conclusion. He alone has the key to it and the reader anxiously waits with bated breath to see how the poet will solve his problems.

Character study is another interesting feature of the art of Surana. The artistic nature of the age is seen in the great care taken by Prabandha poets in depicting heroines. Manikundala and Nalakubara, two divine men, shared the love of Kala-Bhashini. Manikundala loved her and she loved the two in turn. Her love was impossible of attainment and she roams the world to achieve her object. She puts her precious life in danger for the sake of love. In the moment of highest ecstasy she learns that she fell into the right hands though unwittingly. Self-respecting and proud lady that she was, Kala-Bhashini protests her love to Manikundala though he may not be convinced of it. Her fear was, lest he should think of her as a common woman. In yet another pair of strange lovers, Sugatri and her husband Shalina, Surana attempts the portrayal of home-life in its simplicity and beauty. The simple-minded Brahmin youth, Shalina, is so blunt that he cannot appreciate the charms of his young love when she approaches him gaily bedecked in ornaments. She is after his heart only when she is free of this load and toils in the garden at digging and watering, with her transparent body bespattered with particles of mud. The poet gives us the suggestion that art in simplicity is more charming than art in gaudiness and artificiality.

Surana also had a keen sense of humour which is rather seldom met with in Telugu poetry. He created a set of characters in the same strain as in *The Comedy of Errors* of Shakespeare. The same comic effect is produced in the scene where we have two Rambhas and two Nalakubaras who look alike, and the characters are represented as blundering. This humorous creation is altogether rare in Telugu poetry and is a proof of the originality of Surana. In *Prabhavati-Pradyumnam* Pingali Surana is on the heights. He seems to have withdrawn into himself. This he

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dedicated to the memory of his father, and the exigencies of writing to the approval of a patron did not arise. He was above all a true artist and poet, and these qualities are best illustrated in *Prabhavati*. His creations are ever new and charming. Suchimukhi, a swan, plays the great part of a statesman and ambassador and holds the strings of action. Surana's attention in his later days turned away from the externals of poetry. Puns and double meanings and other verbal juggleries are given up once for all. Surana says in *Prabhavati*: "It is indeed a divine blessing to be able to write in a way that words are not out of place, that they are well-knit and suggest a wealth of meaning, that the thoughts of the poet are easily apprehended. There should be no repetition of thoughts and the poet must avoid digression. He must lay stress on the matter in hand and keep an eye on the mutual relation of incidents so that there is no incongruity in their sequence."

Bhattu Murty is the last of the great poets of the Prabandha age. Great as he is, the beginnings of the decline of the Romantic school of poetry are marked in him. Like Alexander Pope, Murty was a great versifier and scholar. His verse is highly polished and rhythmical. We are obliged to him for exploring the musical possibilities of the Telugu language and his diction is attuned to music. He had the title of 'the ocean of secrets of the art of music' conferred on him. He richly deserved this sonorous decoration. Any verse from his *Vasu-Charitra* chosen casually will illustrate the strength and weakness of Murty at once. One is struck by the unbridgeable flow of it and one's ear is feasted by the jingling assonance of similar sounds. Sometimes the diction rolls down in a torrent of resonant Sanskrit compounds. Elsewhere it glides on inaudibly with the silent music of the rivulet, on the bed of supple and smooth words. Master of language and diction Murty was undoubtedly. He has a passion for *slesha* (double meanings) and *yamaka* (alliteration). They came to him without any effort, and were as natural with him as the breath at the nostrils. He said about himself that he knew many languages, was capable of pouring forth hundreds of verses in an hour, and was well skilled in *Asu*, i. e. 'unpremeditated verse'. Milton alone among English poets claimed this virtue and Murty's composition attains to the heights of Milton's verse in its quality and sonorousness. In

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short, Murty holds the palm in Telugu poetry, if language alone can make true poetry.

But like Pope, Murty fails when we examine him from the human interest in his verse. It fills the ear but starves the heart. The intellect in Murty took supreme control of the heart in him. He is striking but unconvincing. A glance at his previous achievements will be enough to make us appreciate why his masterpiece *Vasu-Charitra* is what it is. Starting as a poet in the time of the great Ramaraya of Vijayanagara, he earned for himself the title of 'Rama-Raja-Bhushana'—the gem of the court of Rama Raja. His first known work is a manual of Telugu Rhetoric on the lines of Sanskrit works of *Alamkara*. He, being skilled in feats of memory, must have performed many such 'Avadhanas,' wherein the poet gives out unpremeditated verse on miscellaneous subjects at the choice of the audience. In these tricks of memory, the word and not the soul of poetry comes to prominence. He thus perfected himself in word-painting and imported this vicious predilection into the field of high poetry. *Rasa*, or the emotional thrill in poetry, his verse does not excite. No doubt in individual verses he manages to depict all the stages necessary to call forth *Rasa*, but the whole effect of his *Kavya* is one of appeal to the intellect rather than to the heart of the reader. Murty's failure as a true poet lay in the limitations of his subject-matter, the *Vastu* of his *Kavya*. The plot is the animated body of a composition into which the poet breathes life by his divine imagination. The Prabandha school is known for its originality in plot-weaving, and Peddana and Surana are the best examples of poets with story interest. Murty in the opening verses of his *Vasu-Charitra* lays down the dictum about plot: "Stories evolved purely out of the imagination of the poet are fictitious and are like false gems. Stories of Puranic origin are like unkempt diamonds fresh from the mine. Historic stories, dressed by the high imagination of great poets, are true, polished stones." Therefore his work will be a compromise between the two, a *via media*. In the first category he evidently has a fling at Surana and his *Kala-Purnodaya*. By all accounts, Murty was a contemporary of Surana. Now by the test of 'a true stone' Murty's plot has all the externals of a great plot required by rhetorical manuals. But the soul in it,

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which he is expected to instil, is only of the intellectual type. He adorns this wooden frame by the best conceits of his scholarly imagination and tries to stir the feelings, but alas, the patient reader strikes his head against the wall of *slesha* and *yamaka* and comes back empty as ever. Murty would have succeeded if he had the poetic heart. If he lived a poem, he would have written one. He was a panegyrist from the beginning and a reveller in the outer zone of poetry. By birth he belonged to that extraordinary class of traditional panegyrists who to this day are not a rare sight at the courts of Rajahs.

Murty fails to stir our feelings by the absence of the pathetic element in his best work. Pathos, according to the canons of the West and the East, is admitted to be an indispensable element of all high poetry. The feelings of the reader are stirred and 'purged' according to Aristotle, 'through pity and fear.' Where this life-giving sentiment is absent, the poem falls flat. The master-minds of India, Kalidasa and Bhavabhuti, are immortalised by Shakuntala and Sita, the women of love and pity. Amongst Prabandha heroines, Varudhini of Peddana and Kala-Bhashini of Surana live by the sentiments of *Sringara* (Erotic) and *Karuna* (Pathos) which they evoke in the reader. The hero and heroine of *Vasu-Charitra*, Vasu and Girika, are thoroughly sentimental and no pity is excited by the lovelorn condition of either. Consequently there is no rejoicing at the fruition of their love. As Kalidasa puts it, "One scorched by the Sun is alone capable of appreciating the joy of a shady tree." Similarly love shines serene through tears. Love at first sight is purged and chastened by pity into the pure and divine sentiment.

Unfortunately age did not mean wisdom with poet Murty. His insatiable greed for the pun and double meaning word was ever on the increase. He looked out for fresh fields of investment for his boundless scholarship. Surana, his contemporary, wrote a *Kavya* with the stories of Rama and the Pandavas combined into one. So Murty rushed into this sort of double-meaning poetry, and chose a more difficult combination as a test of his scholarly talent. He brought forth *Harischandra-Nalopakhyanamu*, the stories of two great Emperors of Puranic India woven together into one *Kavya*. Each verse of the book yields, by different breaking up of words, the story of Harischandra and

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Nala in turn. Admirable feat indeed! A true touch-stone, of mastery over language. The verses too do not lose their music. Such is the unerring musical ear of Murty. The descriptions of Nature too are more realistic and original and less scholarly and artificial than in *Vasu-Charitra*. But the whole deserved a better conception of the functions of true poetry. It is not the battle-ground for contending scholarship but the ever-green pasture where the 'Sahridaya' is feasted. But with Murty poetry is the close preserve of the poet.

After Murty, Telugu literature fell on evil days. With the fall of the Vijayanagara Empire, there was no home where true genius could be nursed. And genius too 'fled to brutish beasts.' Later poets lacked the divine purpose of Tikkana and the artistic soul of the Prabandha age. They aimed at imitation and perfecting their models. Unluckily the model that appealed to them was Murty's *Vasu-Charitra*. They were fitted to produce only hybrid imitations of *Vasu-Charitra* and delighted to call them '*Pilla Vasu-Charitra*' '*Vasu in miniature*.' Naturally the poetry was only second rate and third rate. It was the ambition of each one of them to vie with Surana and Murty in the *Kavya* of double meanings. Some went to the extent of producing triple meaning *Kavyas* and occasionally with four-fold meanings. The word and not its meaning counted with them. It is also to their credit that they exhausted all the metrical devices which involved laborious thinking and where the arrangement of words was more arithmetical than poetical.

In this general decline stood out two little havens where small vessels could still unload their cargo. The court of the Nayakas at Tanjore was one of the last asylums of Telugu poets. Here flourished poet Chemakura Venkata Kavi who produced his *Vijaya Vilasa* in the Prabandha style. He is a highly musical and deft poet, but the dictum of Murty that the plot must be a 'mixed one' held all later poets in its octopus hands, and stamped out originality in theme and treatment. The primary aim of the poet was to excel *Vasu-Charitra* in the oddity of conceits and subtle expression. Telugu language and literature found their last trenches in the noble court of the Kutub-Shahi Sultans of Golconda. Those wonderful princes laid the Telugu people under a deep debt of gratitude both by

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their tolerant rule and by unstinted patronage of their language. To them belongs high praise for continuing the dim flicker of the Telugu lamp, and all honour to them. History does not think highly of them, but they will live as long as Telugu literature lives. One of them, Sultan Ibrahim Shah, was the patron of a poet named Ponnaganti Telagana who dedicated to the King his work *Yayati Charitra*. Now this poem is more than of ordinary interest to Telugu literature. For the first time an attempt was made to write a whole poem in what we call 'pure Telugu' or 'Accha Telugu.' Till now no poet had the vision to make purely native words, to the entire exclusion of *Tatsama* and *Tadbhava* (words of Sanskrit origin) answer the needs of diverse expression required in a *Kavya*. It was certainly a very bold experiment and Telagana carried it out successfully.

But it is open to question whether 'Accha Telugu' is capable of expressing a multitude of meanings and shades of thought. Sanskrit words became such an integral part of Telugu even in the days of Nannaya that it would be difficult to dislodge them without leaving vacant niches, and the holes will be so numerous that we cannot hope to refill them by equivalent words of purely native origin. Hence, interesting as the experiment of Telagana and the Sultan Ibrahim Shah was, it is only a passing phase in our literature. By the exclusion of Sanskritic words, the poet's compass of vocabulary is so narrowed down that he has to move stiffly, and the genius of a Telagana alone can avoid obscurity and grotesqueness in such atmosphere. To attempt a *Kavya* in pure, native Telugu will be like writing a poem in English purged of the Latin and other elements of vocabulary, in words of purely Anglo-Saxon origin. Even if it were possible, no great poet can so shackle himself with regard to expression and yet succeed in delighting. Telagana had his own followers in the purist school which he fathered. Another poet, Timma of Pithapur, wrote the story of Ramayana in 'Accha Telugu' and it is also popular.

The splendid example of the King encouraged nobles to patronise Telugu literature. One such nobleman of the court of Golconda was Yamin Khan, who accepted the dedication of 'Tapati-Samvaran-Opakhyanamu' of Addanki Gangadhara Kavi.

With the fall of Golconda fell the cause of Telugu literature. In the general confusion that prevailed in the 18th cen-

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tury, Telugu did not produce any masters nor any experiments worthy of notice. We have to wait for the advent of British rule, for the establishment of settled conditions in which alone art and literature can flourish. The story of the modern achievement in Telugu is vast and full of interest. The activity is many-sided, the themes are new, the idealism peculiar to the age. Patriotism and the deification of Nature are the dominant notes of modern poetry. And there is a full outburst of prose writing which is a creation of the modern age in its present form. The drama and the novel, the short-story and the short-poem, are all in their full swing and merit a separate treatment. Suffice it to say that the noble banner of Nannaya and Tikkana is held aloft by modern Telugu poets, and ere long they may re-incarnate themselves, as a Hindu believes!



# Art and Divinity

BY DEWAN BAHADUR T. BHUJANGA RAO

Does Art lead to God? An answer to this question may be given with reference to the theory of perception according to Indian psychology.

When we perceive an external object, say a painting or a statue, it is usually supposed that rays of light from the object strike the retina of the eye; that from the eye a message goes through the nerves to the mind; and that there an image is formed and communicated to the ego or self-consciousness.

Indian psychologists, like, say, Dharmaraja-dhvarindra, put this in a slightly different form. They say that, as soon as the eye catches the object, the mind simultaneously flashes forth like a search-light and envelopes the object and forms a mould for it; and that, after forming the mould, the mind reports the fact to the ego or self-consciousness. Now, there is God's consciousness (*Prameya-chaitanya*) in the external object; and the mind brings that consciousness in relation with the self-consciousness of man. Man again is a fragment of divinity; and his self-consciousness is also a part of God's consciousness (*paramatr-chaitanya*). The mind too is a material vehicle, and there is in it a part of the divine consciousness (*pramana-chaitanya*). It is when these three kinds of consciousness are brought in relation to one another that perception of the object as an external object arises; and further, it is because the three have a common ground, viz. consciousness (*chaitanya*), that they can thus be brought in relation to one another.

The point worthy of note in the above view of perception is the function of the mind. The mind, (as in the Kantian philosophy), forms a mould for the object; and it is through this mould that the ego can 'perceive' the object. So, the ego can see just as much as the mind will allow it to see. If the mind be pure and transparent, the vision is clear; but if otherwise, the vision is blurred. This is why the mind is called '*pramana-chaitanya*' or the 'measure' of consciousness. Whether the perception be full or partial depends on the mind, just as, when one goes down a

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mine of diamonds with a measure, one can bring back just as many diamonds as the measure can hold.

This perhaps may be put in non-technical language by saying that the mind is a kind of window for the soul or ego. The soul looks at external objects through this window and grasps as much God's consciousness embedded in external objects as the window will allow it to see. If the window be enlarged, if the mind be purified, the soul has a greater glimpse of God's consciousness in the outside objects.

This has an important bearing on the question of the sense of beauty in man. On each beautiful object there is God's thought or consciousness of its beauty super-imposed; and the man with an aesthetic sense, looking through the window of his mind and emotions, has a glimpse of that beauty of God. The glimpse is greater when the artist's mind and emotions are purified. When they are fully purified, there comes over the artist the vision of the entire beauty of God, of which the beauty of the external object is a symbol.

Thus does Art lead to God. As Mr. Jinarajadasa once said, if an object be beautiful, it is not only because God's thought of that particular beauty is conveyed to the ego but also because God flashes through the ego and imposes the idea of loveliness on the object. Rightly did Omar Khayyam sing:

The idol said to the idolater, "O my servant,  
Knowest thou for what reason thou hast become mine  
adorer?"

On me hath shone in His beauty that One  
Who looketh forth from thee, O my beholder."

# *Philomena Thumboo Chetty*

BY G. VENKATACHALAM

Some musicians are born. And some take infinite pains to become one. Philomena Thumboo Chetty is a born musician.

When hardly six years old she asked her father for a violin, and at the age of eight she delighted her parents and teachers with her music.

To have passed with honours, at the tender age of thirteen, the Diploma Examinations of F.T.C.L. and L.A.B. is creditable enough for any girl, but to have stormed the portals of the great Paris Conservatoire at sixteen is an incredible achievement for an Indian girl.

Few Indians have taken kindly to European music and fewer still have achieved any fame worth the name in the field. Philomena shines like a solitary star in that naked sky.

Violin, like veena, is a delicate and difficult instrument to master, and even where such mastery has been achieved by any Indian, it has been at the cost of style and beauty.

Tirukodikaval Krishna Iyer and Trichy Govindaswamy Pillay were, undoubtedly, great masters who played exquisite melodies on their violins and revealed their soul and art through that medium, but even they lacked 'style' and 'finesse.'

Style is the man, as well as the artist. And Philomena is an artist with a style.

Technique is all right but it is not all art. Knowledge and skill are necessary but they do not make one a great artist. A great play suffers when badly produced; a fine piece of music gets lost when indifferently performed.

Violin playing has its own technique and style even as veena or sitar. Indians laugh when their music is mutilated by foreigners, and so do the Europeans when their instruments are mis-handled by Indians.

The method of holding a violin, the angle in which the bow is drawn, the volume of tone the instrument is capable of producing when so played, are as much the part of style and

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technique of the art as merely making it reproduce correctly the melodies of a musical piece.

There is a dignity about Philomena when she plays her violin, an artistry about her art as delightful as her personality. She creates an 'atmosphere' and infuses a 'feeling' which are, after all, true tests of a great artist.

"Her modesty is as big an attraction as her masterly and exquisite playing," observed a fellow musician who had heard her play some of the most difficult pieces with an ease and confidence that astonished him.

Sensitiveness of feeling and refinement of playing, these characterise her violin recitals, and they are no mean achievements for a girl of her age.

Philomena was born in Bangalore but her childhood days were mostly spent in Mysore where she was educated in a Convent. 'Rukmalaya,' her home, is a modest little bungalow in Mysore, as modest as its owner Mr. Thumboo Chetty, her father.

A quiet, god-fearing Christian is this Mr. Thumboo Chetty, a great son of a great father. And thus Philomena was blessed with a rich heritage and it is indeed gratifying that she has so nobly kept up the family tradition and even enhanced it. And nobody is happier today than the proud father.

Artists are often snobs. Not so this girl. Wealth, position, influence and even the much coveted honour of being presented at the Court as a *debutante*, while yet a school-going girl, have not touched her head.

Philomena's dream is to be an artist, to have a career. A beautiful dream but an exacting life!

When I first met her she was a little girl, her enthusiasm as lively and fresh as her complexion. She came rushing to our place to attend a song recital by the poet Harindranath Chattopadhyaya. The poet was in no mood for songs that day and Philomena was visibly disappointed. She was not keen even to attend a lecture on music by Harindranath. She wanted the real stuff. Such was her enthusiasm for music even in her childhood. Music was in her blood.

She is today a full-fledged musician, a first-rate violinist. She has already won laurels in foreign lands and is now winning the applause of her compatriots. Her first private recital for

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her royal patron was an unqualified success. His Highness, a connoisseur himself, was greatly impressed, we were told. European critics raved over her performance; such Indians as understood European music were full of silent admiration. Since then she has charmed her audiences in Bangalore, Calcutta, and Madras.

Several Indian girls have studied European music and shown commendable mastery of the art, both as composers and artistes. Mrs. Comalata Dutt, Mrs. Daulat Sethna, Miss Leela Lakshmanan are well-known as gifted composers, but Philomena is the first Indian girl to win a European reputation. And it must be remembered that Western audiences are more critical and harder to please.

And Philomena was lucky to have been born a Mysorean. Her father, a trusted friend and adviser of the Maharaja, did not bring up his daughters in luxury or surround their young lives with false pomp and show. They were educated to be simple and to make the best use of their talents. Philomena's love was for music which the fond parents encouraged.

Her six years' stay in Europe has helped to draw out all her latent talent and to make a fine musician of her. She had exceptional opportunities of studying under great masters, of attending some of the famous musical conservatoires and of listening to some of the world-renowned artistes in Europe.

After receiving the approbation and good wishes of her master Georges Enesco, she appeared before appreciative audiences in London and Oxford and charmed them with her personality and performances.

Young, intelligent, bright and vivacious, Philomena impresses one greatly. She is an artist without the poses or eccentricities of one. She is modest and sweet-natured, and, for her age, wise too in many ways.

A rebel at heart, she hides the fiery nature of her soul under the mask of a gentle serene face lit by two large, dark, soulful eyes. And who would not wish this brave little daughter of India the quick fulfilment of her hopes, a glorious adventure as an artist, an immortal fame as a woman! Good luck to Rukma, better known to the world as Philomena Thumboc Chetty!

## ‘After the Battle’

(Rendered from Tamil by P. N. Appuswami)

[On the battle-field, an old lady seeks for the body of her son among the corpses of the slain. To her mute question, the following is the answer. This small poem of eleven lines is taken from *Purattirattu*, an anthology of about fifteen hundred poems compiled about five hundred years ago and now being published for the first time by Mr. Vaiyapuri Pillai, Reader in Tamil in the University of Madras. *Purattirattu* gives this as a selection from *Tagadur Yattirai*. The latter is available in fragments only, occurring either as quotations in the commentaries, or as selections in *Purattirattu*. It is a pity that this noble war-poem is lost, for the available fragments are of high quality.]

Is it your son you seek, old lady of the silver locks, with  
body bent, and wrinkled face, and withered paps?

Could this be your son, I wonder?

This hero, I know, fought for his Emperor-King; and in  
fierce battle did his duty.

Here he lies couched and pillowed on the once-loud war-  
drums. Proudly spurning the elephant, his sturdy leg is stretched  
stiff in death.

The hovering kites form a thick canopy over him.

Mounds of his slain surround him like a barrier,

And alas! the vultures eat his fair body.

I wonder, lady, if this hero is not the son, whom you seek!

# *Paganism and Religion*

BY PROF. M. K. CHAKRAVARTI

(Principal, The S. D. P. College, Beawar, Rajputana)

Although the moral ideals of all civilised peoples are more or less the same, yet there is a difference in the outlook on life—in the angle of vision, so to say—which clearly marks off one people from another, or one set of peoples from another set. Everybody knows that there is a striking difference between the eastern and western views of life, in spite of the fact that the progress of science and the conditions of modern life are bringing the East and the West very close to each other and perhaps unconsciously creating a new type of man.

This difference of philosophical outlook is too often stated in India as a difference between Spiritualism and Materialism; and in Europe as between Mysticism and Rationalism—the one producing metaphysics and the other science. Neither classification is completely correct, although there is some truth in each. To my mind, the real spiritual difference between the East and the West is the old difference between Hellenism and Hebraism or Judaism writ large. The one is rational, practical, and pragmatic; whereas the other is religious, moral, and speculative. Christianity tried to harmonise the two points of view, but failed. There is no true religion in the average European mind, just as there is no true rationalism in the average Asiatic, except perhaps in modern Japan.

India, for many reasons, may be regarded as the spiritual centre of the East, for all the great religions of the world have at one time or another come together in India. In fact, there are only two types of mind that have produced religion: the Aryan and the Semitic. Christianity and Islam are the products of Judaism; whereas Buddhism, Jainism, and Zoroastrianism are the products of Aryanism. The difference between these two groups of religion may be roughly indicated by saying that the Semitic group is pre-eminently moral, and the Aryan group pre-eminently philosophical. The one is interested in 'being' while the other's interest

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is in 'knowing.' Both are concerned with life, *i. e.* the moral and intellectual aspects of life. But 'being' and 'knowing' do not exhaust the functions of life; a great sphere of life is concerned with 'doing.' Hellenism and its spiritual descendant Romanism made this great department of activity its own from the earliest times. The Greeks were the first people of the world to understand the value and importance of action. As soon as the Greek philosopher revealed to the people the wonderful power of the mind, they immediately proceeded to translate that power into action, in other words, into result, by producing changes in the material world. They became artisans, architects, sculptors, traders, administrators, soldiers, and State-builders. Speculation was confined to a limited few, and even these could not escape the necessity of doing one or another kind of practical work,—sculpture in the case of Socrates,—for their livelihood.

The Greek religion arose out of the aesthetic and creative imagination of the people in contact with Nature. It owed nothing to speculation: on the contrary, as soon as speculation gained the upper hand, the religion quickly disappeared after the brief spell of Neo-Platonic mysticism. The Roman conception of religion was still more superficial than the Greek. The worship of the Gods and Goddesses was based upon a contractual system of give and take. But the Roman proved to be a greater builder than the Greek; builder with brick and stone, and builder of wealth and empire.

The modern nations of Europe are all spiritual children of Greece and Rome, although many of them never came in contact with either in their palmy days. They are all spiritual inheritors of heathenism, whether of the Hellenic or of the Gothic variety. Asia made a great endeavour to convert these people to Religion, and even made a religious conquest of Europe under the name of Christianity, but the heart of the peoples is still unconquered. Their philosophy of life is still the old philosophy of the Greeks—Action, Result. The all-conquering Alexander the Great is the hero of Europe and not the crucified Christ.

• Under the impact of modern science, which is an elaboration and development of the old Greek rationalism, the thin veneer of Christian morality is peeling off, and the whole Christian



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flock of the West is going back to the Greek fold. 'Scratch a Russian and you will find a Tartar,' is an old proverb, but 'Scratch a European and you will find a pagan' is equally true. The age during which Europe was cut off from the influence and example of the Greek and was completely dominated by Religion, is regarded by the historians as the Dark Age of Europe; and the recovery of the works of the Greek poets and artists is hailed as the Renaissance. It is strange that the student of Religion in Europe does not sufficiently grasp these obvious facts of history and their significance. Ever since the Renaissance, Greece has been winning back what she had lost to St. Paul and his fellow preachers. The Reformation represents only one of the streams by which the mind of Europe was seeking to flow back to the old bed of Greek rationalism. The Roman Church, which had immensely strengthened herself during the Dark middle ages, had woven a pall of mystic superstition over the mind of the peoples. Some of the men who had caught sight of the great light of Greek rationalism in the field of art, literature, and philosophy became anxious to throw some of its illumination on the mysticism of the Church. Martin Luther was one of them. The Reformers of the Church, in common with the poets, artists and scholars of the Renaissance set their faces backwards—the first going back to the Bible, round which the monasticism of the middle ages had woven endless cobwebs, while the others went straight to the Greek models and sources.

It is interesting how the Greek rationalist spirit took advantage of the long dispute between Rome and the Reformation not only to win back what it had lost, but also to prepare the ground for a terrible vengeance against the spirit of Religion. The new atheists of Europe, I mean the scientific thinkers, have at last taken the field, but the position of Religion had been already undermined by the cultivation for centuries of heathen 'art and literature.' The mind of Europe is ready for a revolt against Religion and all that old Religion stands for. In fact the revolt has already begun in one part of it.

## Reviews

*Hindu Customs and Their Origins.*—By Stanley Rice, with a Foreword by H. H. the Maharaja Gaekwar of Baroda. (George Allen and Unwin Ltd., London. Price, Sh. 7/6.)

The author is a Madras Civilian who spent many years of his life as District Officer in several districts of the Madras Presidency, and after retirement he was employed in the Baroda State and had a seat in the State Council as a Member of the Baroda Government. Naturally therefore he dedicated the work to His Highness the Maharaja Gaekwar of Baroda. The book contains the Foreword of the Maharaja Gaekwar himself. The work conveys to us the impressions of a foreigner and tries to tackle the vexed problem of the origin of caste in India. He has also given explanations from his own point of view of some of the customs in India which have appeared strange and unaccountable to Westerners, and which have even been condemned as "barbarous and cruel, unintelligible and childish" by them.

This type of book is not new to our present generation of Hindu readers. Many European globe-trotters and sojourners in India and people who have been benefitted by their stay in this country, either as Government servants or otherwise, have striven to record their impressions of the customs and manners, the habits and thoughts of the Hindus, whom they either served or governed. They all labour under the initial difficulty of preconceived notions, pet prejudices and lack of sympathetic understanding. Many among them have not even kept their minds free from the tendency to treat with contempt the ideas and thoughts foreign to their own and to regard, from the imperialistic point of view, all other civilisations and races as primitive and fit only to be civilised by the superior race to which they belong. The difficulty is rendered much greater by the fact that, from the very beginning of history, the Hindu civilisation presents striking features which stand in sharp contrast to the civilisation of the other races of humanity both in the old world and in the new. Further, the records with which one has to deal are mostly in the Sanskrit language which it is very difficult to master. Even for Hindus who have not had a careful and deep education in Sanskrit, the language has remained difficult to be grasped. Still more is it so in the case of foreigners. When once the language is not fully grasped there is great room for misapprehension and for wrong inferences from insufficient data and mistaken identities. This statement will be largely true even in the case of European Orientalists, who have laboured hard in the field of Indology. In the case of officials who tried to gather impressions about Hindu manners and customs in India in the course of their

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official life, there is much greater room for wrong inferences from a superficial understanding, especially owing to the fact that the informants and friends with whom they usually move are not persons of rank and culture, able to speak to them fearlessly and frankly, and eradicate wrong impressions and prejudices. Further, owing to the recent national revival in the country and the emphasis laid upon the brighter aspects of Hindu civilisation by the patriotic sons of the soil, a natural reaction is created in the minds of Englishmen and other Westerners which induces them to exaggerate the undesirable features of the Hindu civilisation, in the belief that they furnish arguments for the continuance of the imperialistic domination. To overcome all these difficulties and to keep one's mind free from all these warping tendencies and to show a sympathetic understanding towards civilisations alien to one's own, is indeed a very difficult task and few among the Western writers can be said to have succeeded in it.

Mr. Stanley Rice devotes a good portion of the book to the adumbration of a theory of his own as regards the origin of the caste system in India and to the criticism of theories advanced by other writers. He rejects 'the racial purity theory,' as he calls it, and the occupational theory, and comes to the conclusion that caste arose out of a combination of factors, *viz.*, the customs of the aborigines in India, the system established by the Dravidians and its later adoption by the Aryans who polished and perfected what they found; and this entire process of evolution from the germ of the customs of the aborigines was largely affected by the force of religion and "neither pride of race nor convenience of economic relations, nor any of those things which might influence a modern man" was responsible for it. It is difficult to appreciate the various steps of argument by which he arrives at this conclusion, nor is it possible to say that there are sufficient, satisfactory data for them. Beyond inferring, from what we know of the customs of other primitive races of the world, the probable nature of the customs of the aborigines of India, there are no evidences either literary or historical or archaeological. Beyond the fact of the existence of certain tribes in India, it is hardly possible even to say who the pre-historic aborigines of India were. Mr. Stanley Rice is of the opinion that "we are entitled to make decent inferences from the customs of other primitive races," but this can hardly suffice to raise one's conclusions from the level of mere speculation to the region of historical truth. It is not also possible to fully substantiate the statement that caste was not an Aryan institution. It may even be granted that caste with all its present incidents and rigidity as found in its present condition may not have been the original Aryan institution. But a nebulous four-caste arrangement based on certain sociological principles may have been an Aryan institution. The great legislator, Manu, is clearly of opinion that the four-fold caste system differentiates the Aryan from all non-Aryan peoples, but it may be said that in his day he found caste a permanent

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institution and therefore was as much speculating as ourselves now, as regards its nature. But, the fact remains that nowhere in Indian literature do we find evidence of any idea that caste was not an Aryan institution. Probably, the 'racial purity theory' has not legs to stand on. The vast structure erected on the meaning of the word 'Varna' cannot be said to have a sure foundation, for it is well-known that in Sanskrit, words have many meanings, sometimes even contradictory meanings such as the word 'Arath' which means both 'near' and 'distant.' The word 'Varna' has many meanings and because one of its meanings is colour, it is not proper to erect a whole argument that colour was at the root of the division of caste. The occupational theory has much greater basis. In fact, in early Sanskrit literature more stress is laid on the occupational theory than in later years. It was possible for a person to pass from one caste to another by reason of his change of occupation, and the indicia of caste rested more on the occupation that a person followed than on his birth. But from the beginning, so far as the literary evidences go, birth also was a great factor. Hence it is not possible to ascribe the origin of caste to the theory of occupation. Some have argued that the *Rig-Veda* points to a period when there might not have been the caste system. But at the time when we find a reference to it in the *Rig-Veda*, we have to infer that it was already a fully developed institution and, therefore, we have to presume its existence for some long period before that date.

An impartial investigation of the whole matter leaves us in this predicament *viz.*, that we are unable to say for all practical purposes when caste arose in India. All the great minds of ancient India had tried to solve their problems, accepting the social basis of the caste system. Its present rigidity and the incidents attaching to it, namely, restrictions of marriage, inter-dining, etc., may be evolutions of a later date, but the broad central idea of the four-fold caste must have had a great antiquity. At any rate, it was there throughout the centuries as an ideal division of Society to which the Hindu sociological system ought to converge. Mr. Stanley Rice is not entirely correct in identifying the principle of caste with religion. Though a superficial survey of the history of India may lead one to identify even social movements as having a religious basis, it is not impossible to conceive of the existence of the Hindu religion without the caste system. The main tenets of Hinduism do not need the foundation of caste.

The caste system in India has had both its good features and bad portrayed by Western writers. Some have condemned it as wholly evil, others have held it responsible for the vitality of Hindu civilisation. Even those who have condemned it as wholly evil cannot in fairness ascribe to it greater horrors and injustices than the class warfare of modern Europe or the acerbity between the artificial nation-groups of the West presents. None

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can deny that the later rigidity and numerous sub-divisions of the caste system have weakened the solidarity of Hindu Society. The lengths to which social injustice sometimes has gone have also to be disapproved, but this is not the same as condemning the original system as entirely evil. If we can have an ideal of Society of the whole of humanity without any divisions, and based on perfect unity and co-operation, then caste also is an evil. But so long as we cannot have that, it is impossible to condemn caste as wholly evil. It has its own democratic aspects in India which are sometimes ignored in the wholesale condemnation of it. The poverty of the Brahmin has not stood in the way of his being honoured by the other castes, and while it may be sometimes regarded that the claim of the Brahmins to superiority is overdone, still it is largely owing to his self-imposed badge of poverty that the claim has been tolerated by the other castes. No other country in the world presents the like spectacle of a caste which claims superiority without resting it on any temporal advantages and privileges.

K. BALASUBRAHMANIA AIYAR

*Big Game Encounters.*—Edited by Stanley Jepson. (The Times Press, Bombay. Published by H. F. & G. Witherby Ltd., London. Price Sh. 8/6.)

"The foundation of the book," says the Editor, "is a careful selection from a number of articles which appeared over the course of two years in the News Magazine I edit, *The Illustrated Weekly of India*." The articles themselves are the true accounts by experienced shikaries of their most exciting moments with the Big Game in India mainly, and also in South Africa. The saying that truth is stranger than fiction could have no more vital vindication than these fascinating pages; for, which tale of tenseness and horror could surpass the story of Mrs. Smythies (Chapter 1) who had to encounter a wounded tiger, springing up to the machan, and after misfiring had to grapple with the snarling beast as best she could by thrusting the barrel of a rifle into its throat; or the story of Mr. Combe (Chapter 16) who had to wrestle with a ferocious lion who chewed off the shikari's left knee until a brave Indian boy came along and pulled the Sahib literally from the jaws of death? Such incidents abound.

The experiences recorded in the book show how unfounded is the popular superstition that the elephants are afraid of lions and tigers whom the latter could kill and overpower with facility. In Chapter 13 Lt. Col. Whitworth shows how, far from being afraid of the tiger, the elephant can grapple with it not merely with terrific power but also with subtle cunning.

The four Chapters in the Section II of the book are written by the Editor himself. The Chapters on the mind of the wild, how wild animals attack, the fear complex of the wild, are of absorbing interest. Here the reader will not find an account of

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thrilling episodes but would meet with a large deduction from experience, bordering on an essay on animal psychology. Shikaries can hardly afford to neglect this part of the book, even if they could discover in their own experiences parallels for the incidents recorded in the earlier Chapters.

As one reads through the pages of this very interesting book, one cannot help asking the question whether hunting as a pastime is ethically and aesthetically justifiable. In the pre-historic ages man hunted for food. The modern hunting is for the shikari's own diversion. Is it the proper thing for a man to do,—seeking wild animals in the depths of forests, and, entrenched on machans, guided by beaters and boys, and always assisted by the rifle, shooting them? The combat is hardly even, and man's advantages are so overpowering. In a world that has come to look upon hunting as a pleasant social art, conferring on the shikari a halo of romantic distinction, the question suggested above must appear not merely pedantic but distinctly provincial. When animals kill one another they have at least the inexorable justification of hunger. When man kills animals it is for his own diversion. This thought is not provoked by any doctrinaire squeamishness nor is it said in detraction of the intrinsic interest and charm of these very gripping pages.

M. S. C.

*Sri Ramakrishna: His Unique Message.*—By Swami Ghanananda. (The Ramakrishna Mission, Mylapore, Madras. Price, Re. 1.)

This is a tribute to the memory of the Master on the occasion of his Birth-Centenary which was celebrated in a fitting manner throughout India and in other parts of the world in February last. The Swami holds that the unique message of Sri Ramakrishna was the harmony of religions and that this forms his greatest contribution to spiritual thought. Sri Ramakrishna Pramahansa belongs to that illustrious hierarchy of saints of our land who have demonstrated to a doubting world the truth of the great spiritual teachings of the religion of their birth. It is also true to say that he belongs to the great galaxy of the mystics of the world who are not of one country, who exemplify the truth of the fundamentals of all religions and the unity of real spiritual experience. In our country, the vitality of our religion throughout these centuries has been preserved only by the saints and mystics who, time and again, have striven to weed out the unnecessary growths of customs and prejudices and to re-establish the essentials in their pristine purity and vigour. Sri Ramakrishna appeared at a time in the history of our country when the Hindu religion itself was divided into diverse antagonistic sects and creeds, and religious feuds arose on account of the militant activities of two other great religions of the world, Islam and Christianity. The emphasis which Sri Ramakrishna laid on individual experience as the sole guide to Truth, the hope and optimism which he inspired by demonstrating the possibility of the realisation of

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God by all men, the proof he gave of the utility of the Sadhanas taught by our religion,—all these were badly needed in the present age when the minds of people were thrown into hesitancy and confusion by scepticism and materialism on the one hand, and by sectarianism and bigotry on the other. As was narrated by Swami Vivekananda once, it was Sri Ramakrishna who was bold enough to shake off his scepticism, by answering without hesitation in the affirmative the question put by him viz., "Have you seen God?" Sri Ramakrishna was, in the language of the Vedanta, a Jivanmukta—a realized soul who continued to do his duty on earth even after God-realisation, only for the sake of service to humanity. He fulfilled, in ample measure, the great ideal of all true Saints and *Bhaktas*,—unselfish love and service to humanity in the true spirit of detachment and self-surrender. The advocates of Humanism at the present day are not tired of emphasising that service to humanity is a much greater ideal than individual salvation. But it was Sri Ramakrishna who demonstrated the truth which the Hindu religion has always emphasised, of the necessity for man attaining spirituality before he can do real unselfish service to humanity. Hence it is that the story goes of the Indian philosopher who met Socrates and answered him that unless man understood things divine he could not understand things human. To Sri Ramakrishna who attached great importance to spiritual experience and who regarded it as the only religion, it was easy to comprehend the harmony of all religions. It was in the dawn of history that the ancient verse of the *Rig-Veda* rang clear, "The one Truth, the Sages utter in many ways." It revealed the principle which explains the diversity of the religions and creeds of the world. This message of Sri Ramakrishna has immense practical value at the present day both in politics and in religion. If it is realised by the votaries of every religion in our country that, with devotion to one's own religion and appreciation of its teachings can be combined tolerance and respect for the followers of other religions, the Hindu-Muslim riots and communal misunderstandings which have marred the fair face of India at the present day will be things of the past and there will again reign peace and amity among all sects of Indians.

K. BALASUBRAHMANIA AIYAR

## KANNADA

*Buddha-vachana-parichaya and Milinda-prasna*.—By G. P. Rajaratnam. (Pali-Kannada Anuvada Mala of Satya Sahitya Man-tapa, Malleswaram, Bangalore, 1937. Printed at Dharma Prakasa Press, Mangalore. Price. Ordinary Edition, Rs. 4; Library Edition, Rs. 7-8-0.)

This work is an excellent translation of selections from the Pali Buddhist Texts and forms a very useful introduction to a study of Buddhism. The first part contains some of the best portions of the *Vinaya Pitaka* and the *Sutta Pitaka*, and in

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selecting these Mr. Rajaratnam has shown a wide reading and an intimate acquaintance with the Buddhist Texts. It is well known that out of the three baskets (*Tripitaka*) of Buddhist canonical writings, the first two, namely the *Vinaya* and the *Sutta Pitakas* alone, are really essential for a grasp of Buddhist religion and philosophy. Mrs. Rhys Davids declares that "our knowledge of Buddhist philosophy would in no degree suffer, were the whole of the *Abhidamma* lost." As for the *Milinda Panha*, scholars have opined that the last four sections of the work are later additions and only serve to amplify the points dealt with in the earlier portion of the work. Mr. G. P. Rajaratnam has therefore wisely confined his selections to the first two *pitakas* and the first three sections of the *Milinda-panha* only. The translation is in chaste Kannada which retains all the beauty and grace of the original Pali, while at the same time avoiding the tiresome repetitions found in the original.

One has only to read the chapter on 'The conceit of Caste,' or 'The Qualifications of a Brahmin' to realise how aptly words written millenniums ago apply to the present day conditions, and how much we have yet to learn from our experience in the past. Such works as these are not merely of academic or scholarly interest, but are as much necessary for a man of the world to guide him in his life and everyday activities. Mr. Rajaratnam's efforts in this direction are particularly noteworthy and we earnestly hope that he will publish many more such excellent translations before long.

The book is beautifully bound and the author's brief introduction, the select index, and the glossary are extremely useful.

P. SREENIVASACHAR



Opinion of  
Sir C. V. Raman, M.A., D.Sc., F.R.S., N.L.

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